

THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Showers and sun

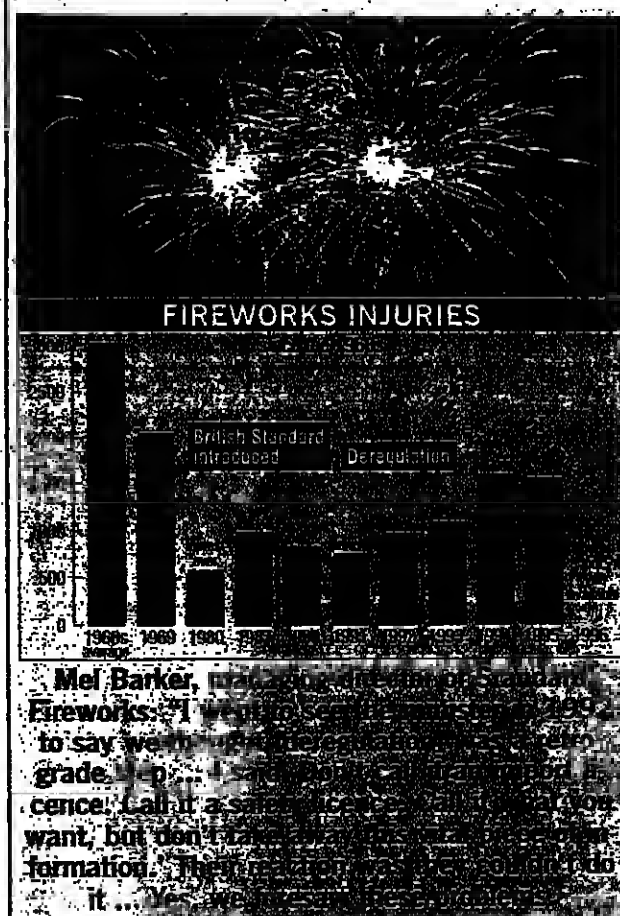
(RP45P) 40p

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A new slant from New York
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A night of gunpowder, Whitehall failure and rant



FIREWORKS INJURIES

Mei Barker, 19, was injured by fireworks on Bonfire Night. She says she was not warned of the danger.

Deregulation blamed for Chinese-made peril

Charles Arthur and Charlie Bain

The number of injuries caused by fireworks has rocketed since controls on imports were lifted in 1993, because deadly "bombs" from China are not being tested properly, safety campaigners and manufacturers said yesterday.

They said the Government had shrugged off warnings of increased danger to the public, and had ignored advice on how to keep the import and testing licensing regime introduced for fireworks in 1989.

Following the revelation that two deaths at the weekend were caused by Chinese-made fireworks, safety campaigners said dangerous and sub-standard devices from the Far East were putting lives at risk. They feared that the death toll from fireworks could be even higher after Bonfire Night tonight.

Nigel G. Smith, Labour's summer affairs spokesman, said deregulation had "compromised public safety" and called for a closer monitoring of imports.

ports: "Against the advice of safety experts, the firework industry and Trading Standards Officers, the Department of Trade and Industry swept away import rules that required specific licences for imported fireworks," he said.

"Injuries immediately reached levels not seen in the UK for over 20 years. There must now be much closer monitoring of imports so there is complete accountability for all fireworks."

The Government said yesterday that European legislation on fireworks had forced the re-introduction of the import licence system - in which companies had to provide full details of any shipments to the Health and Safety Executive, which was responsible for testing that imports met BS7114, covering construction, composition and labelling.

David Hattersley, the headmaster who died, was killed by a firework, which he was making. A 34-year-old city trader, was killed by a firework with instructions in Chinese only.



The Gunpowder plotters: Guy Fawkes was once a very divisive festival National Portrait Gallery

Forgotten fifth's amen

Andrew Brown

The fireworks tonight will unite hundreds of thousands of children in delight, tinged with just a little fear. Yet Guy Fawkes Day was once a deeply divisive festival, which mingled religion and nationalism in a way that now seems very foreign.

The Church of England would hold services on 5 November. The congregation would pray: "We yield thee our unfeigned thanks and praise for the wonderful and mighty deliverance of our gracious sovereign King James the First, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy, and Commons of England, then assembled in Parliament, by Popish treachery."

We have come a long way. Last month the Catholic Bishops of England instructed the faithful how they should approach the vote, but not once did anyone call them agents of a foreign conspiracy. That accusation is now reserved for believers in the European Union.

Late-night talks on NHS crisis

Colin Brown, Chief Political Correspondent

The battle for an extra £1.5bn for the National Health Service was taken to the wire last night by Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health, in last-minute talks at the Treasury before today's meeting of the Cabinet which will prepare the ground for tax cuts in the Budget.

The Cabinet is expected to endorse higher spending on health, the police and schools, at the expense of cuts in road building, housing, national heritage and other programmes, although it is likely to require a further meeting on Thursday to settle the figures.

As Mr Dorrell made his 11th-hour bid for more money for the NHS in the run-up to the election, further evidence emerged of the crisis facing the NHS. The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts estimated English hospitals needed a minimum of £200m -

"For over 17 years, through thick and thin, we have been a part of the NHS. It's become a habit. So today I give you a health service guarantee. Our manifesto will pledge that the NHS will get more over the next five years than it has in the last 17 years." John Major, Conservative Party conference, 11 October 1996

less than 1 per cent of total NHS spending - to see them through to the end of the financial year in March. The NHS Trust Federation said that to avoid extending waiting lists and delaying non-urgent surgery such as hip replacements and

varicose-vein treatments, some £300m extra was needed. Mr Dorrell will face Commons questions today over the extent of the crisis. Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, said the NHS faced the biggest squeeze since the Seventies.

But as John Major prepared to chair today's Cabinet, he was accused of fiddling the figures to keep his election pledge to spend more in real terms on the NHS every year.

Draft figures handed by the Department of Health to the

"Anyone who has actually run one or more of the big Departments of State knows how unacceptable it would be to contemplate cuts in the health service, in our education system, or in the resources needed to improve law and order. In a modern and civilised society, no one can regard all public spending as a bad thing."

Kenneth Clarke, House of Commons, 30 November 1993.

committee's figures appear to have changed between the draft and publication. That may be convenient for the Government but it cannot last, the critics say. The funding allocation for health and social services for the current year is no real increase at all and that this is the source of the impending crisis we face this winter.

The Government's claims to be spending more on the NHS have jarred with the daily experience of hospitals struggling to make ends meet. Only last month at the Tory party conference, Mr Major renewed his manifesto commitment to increase spending in real terms every year on the NHS.

However, a close study of the figures shows that it was achieved - and the Government's pledge on NHS spending upheld - by statistical sleight of hand. The Department of Health told the Commons committee the forecast out-turn for 1995-6 would be £34.5bn. When set against the £35.4bn in

the planned total for 1996-7, it meant in real terms, taking into account inflation in the NHS, there would be a fall of 0.3 per cent this year.

But when the figures were published, the forecast out-turn for 1995-6 had been reduced to £34.4bn. That enabled the Government to show that total spending on health and personal services would grow in real terms by 0.1 per cent.

The change was spotted by Hugh Bayley, a Labour member of the committee and an expert on health economics. Mr Bayley said: "I would say that the real-terms increase is just not being met this year. It looks as though they are fiddling the

figures. They have not added an extra penny but they have shown growth by reducing the figures for the previous year."

But Labour's attack could be blunted by the refusal of the shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, to allow Labour to match the Tory commitment for real-terms growth in health spending.

"We will judge the Budget when we see it but what is absolutely clear is that the drift in the Conservative Party has become such that nobody believes that this is a Budget for the country," he said. "It is going to be a Budget for the Conservative Party."

Bad for America - good for world

Andrew Marshall

For the voters of America, today is a big year. The 1996 election campaign has stirred little excitement. But outside the United States it is a different story. Across the world, the results will be eagerly awaited.

There are plenty of reasons why the US at home might see the election as a snooze. Bill Clinton looks like a shoo-in for the White House, and the Presidential race has never caught fire. There are no great issues, no great crusades, and America is (by and large) at ease with itself. Anyway, the federal government has increasingly little leverage on the domestic problems that preoccupy the nation.

Internationally, by contrast, America remains the pre-eminent player. Bosnia will want to see whether Mr Clinton is prepared to go ahead and authorise a new force to police the Dayton peace deal. Across Eastern Europe, there will be eager anticipation of movement on Nato enlargement. In the Middle East, Arab and Jewish alike will wait to see how a re-elected President will deal with Israel. And then there is a new secretary-general for the United Nations to choose. Trade, aid, military force, and moral suasion: America can provide all of them, if it is minded. Foreign policy issues have barely featured in the cam-

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

campaign. They rarely do. Yet the truth is that there are some big decisions to be taken, and America will have to take the lead. Europe may want to play a larger part in its own defence, but without Washington's backing none of these will work. But we don't get a choice today.

We, the disenfranchised, have different wishes to US voters. Most of the poll evidence shows that Americans have a declining interest in foreign policy; we want the US to remain internationally engaged. US voters have for the last few decades shown a preference for the Congress and President to be held by different parties; we want to see both parties working in synch. They will be keen for a quiet few years; we want Washington to maintain an active presence in the world.

Bill Clinton has been an uncertain leader of the sole superpower, and his foreign policy has often been opportunistic. But on the whole, the world would tick his name. The Republican Right, with its dark hatreds and isolationist tics, is not the partner the world would choose. We'll vote for Bill.

US elections, page 8 and 9

British troops may be sent to Zaire

Christopher Bellamy, Defence Correspondent
Mary Dejevsky, Paris

British troops may join forces with the French to help stem the crisis in central Africa, diplomatic sources said last night.

The comments came after France proposed talks with the UN, its European partners, and African countries on a plan to restore security in the area.

The French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, said a possible international operation would be temporary and would allow up to 1 million mainly Hutu refugees to return to their camps and villages to return home.

There were signs that action was at last on the cards after weeks of inaction. Belgium, the former colonial power, has called a meeting of EU ministers, and the German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, called for a special UN Security Council meeting.

Both the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence said there had been no formal request from the UN for military support but Britain would be talking to France about its proposals for intervention before a summit in Bordeaux this week where John Major will



John Major, above, and Jacques Chirac, join forces



meet President Jacques Chirac.

Although Britain and France disagree on the precise aims and nature of intervention, diplomatic sources said Britain might provide "tactical and logistic support".

They were watching French proposals for a multinational force to intervene in Zaire or on the Zaire-Rwanda border "very closely". In spite of the lessons of the 1994 disaster in Rwanda, when at least 800,000 people died, the UN has no rapid-reaction force of its own to intervene in situations like that now unfolding. Efforts to develop an African peace-keeping force have so far failed.

Yesterday the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, called for international efforts to create protected corridors to coax Rwandan refugees home.

"I'm desperate. I think the only way we can do this is to link up with a lot of governments and UN headquarters. It's a multi-dimensional operation we have to do," she said.

With the US paralysed by the presidential election, France and Britain are the only Western powers likely to be able to intervene. Both have supported creation of an African peace-keeping force but remain the only forces with the expertise and equipment to carry out such an operation.

The British favour securing a withdrawal route for refugees from Zaire into Rwanda. The French are thinking more of a two-way corridor, taking aid in as well as bringing out refugees, sick and wounded.

However, the two views are not necessarily incompatible.

QUICKLY

Gazza says sorry
Paul Gascoigne, whose inclusion in the England squad for a World Cup qualifying match outraged women's groups, yesterday said he deeply regrets leaving his wife, Sheryl. He spoke of a "rage inside me" and said he has started to sort it out with counselling. Page 26

Backing for Blair
Tony Blair put Labour on notice for an early election after winning approval for the party's draft manifesto from over 90 per cent of members. Page 5

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news

Hairless good boyo creates dazzling effect

To begin at the beginning. It is afternoon in the great brown, gothic brown, MP bobbing, minister yelling House. And on a green bench at the front, William Hague - Secretary of State for Wales and very good boyo - is alternately answering questions and dreaming of leading his party.

Destined for greatness, Hague seems to radiate light from an opening in his head. This is because his pate, almost entirely devoid of follicular product, is for some reason the shiniest at Westminster. Other hairless heads are matt finished, but Hague's is done in skin-coloured deep-gloss, polished with an expensive chamomile by an extremely competent and vigorous chamber-maid. To



DAVID AARONOVITCH

gether with his agreeable smile, the effect is - literally - dazzling. A Yorkshireman himself, all around him he hears the lift of the valleys, as Welshmen (no women), ask and reply to questions. Win Griffiths (Lab, Bridgend) speaks in Chapel language of youngsters being "imbued with moral purpose and direction". The hirsute

and virile-looking junior minister, Gwyn Jones (who is as hairy as Hague is smooth) delivers himself of non sequiturs and absurdities, in a beautiful, almost musical voice. "Anyone in any doubt about Labour's lack of priority for the health service, should look at what they've done to education," he says at one point.

But it is Alan Williams (Lab, Carmarthen) who really gets things moving. Mr Williams suffers two disabilities: one - that he has a voice exactly like Gladys Pugh from Hi-de-hi - is involuntary. The other - a haircut borrowed from Ringo Starr in 1964, and never subsequently restyled - is of his own making. He raises the case of a Mrs Tattersall and her seven children,

who inhabit three rooms in Llandovery. His colleague Allan Rogers (Lab, Rhondda) asks how many are on the housing waiting list in Wales. The minister is indignant - of course they don't have flats for the homeless, and no historians will force them to produce any. But he can tell the House, apparently, how many new trees have been planted in the principality. Which leaves the strong impression that the Welsh Office is far more exercised by treelessness than homelessness. "What about tree-houses?" heckles one Labour member.

The shadow Welsh Secretary Ron Davies, with that handsome plausibility which characterises so many Welsh

politicians, is baiting the Tories over law and order, which can "only be restored by spanking schoolchildren and shooting burglars". This is a reference to Welsh Tory, Walter Sweeney (majority 19, Vale of Glamorgan), who is sitting opposite. Mr Sweeney, a large, half-varnished wooden man (who looks like something that I once made in woodwork class, but decided not to take home) apparently believes in instant and summary justice for burglars. If I saw him late at night, canvassing in my driveway, I'd certainly wonder where I'd put that Olympic .22 calibre handgun.

Mr Sweeney is a fan of yet another Welshman, Michael Howard, who is presenting his Bill for banging everyone up for

ever. Harrying him from argument to clause is my final Welshman, Alex Carlile (Liberal Democrat, Montgomery). Mr Carlile is retiring at the next election, and that is the only sense in which he is retiring; in every other way - with his curling lip and glasses half-way down his nose - he is wonderfully arrogant. For every smooth elision of Howards, Mr Carlile has the answer. If the government had thought sentences too lenient, how many had the Attorney-General appealed to have less supervision and shorter sentences as a result of the proposed legislation? Apparently so. We will miss Mr Carlile.

Mayhew dampens Unionist talks fear

David McKitterick
Ireland Correspondent

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, last night sought to calm Unionist concerns over a conduit for talks which it has opened with Sinn Féin by insisting that the Government was saying nothing in private that it was not already saying in public.

Speculation yesterday centred on the immediate and long-term intentions of the IRA, the implications of any new ceasefire for political talks, and Unionist suspicions that the government might contemplate a deal with the republicans.

In what amounted to a key government characterisation of the channel of communication, which involves the SDLP leader John Hume, Sir Patrick said: "If somebody represents to us that a restatement of our policy, in language that is clear and unequivocal would be helpful, then we will obviously want to consider that."

Sir Patrick's comments did not succeed in dispelling distrust within David Trimble's Ulster Unionist party, and were greeted with disbelief by the Rev Ian Paisley. A spokesman for the DUP Jeffrey Donaldson said: "Given the evidence of the weekend, we would be very suspicious that there is a form of twinning going on between government and Sinn Féin."

Whether it's through Mr Hume or other intermediaries one cannot be sure.

Mr Paisley said: "The more they say they are not involved the more I think they are, because they have lied so much in the past. It seems to me an attempt is being made to buy off the threat of violence in Northern Ireland and the mainland by getting concessions to the IRA-Sinn Féin so that they can find an easy way into the talks."

"It's going to be another colossal sell-out and another colossal conditioning of the people to accept IRA-Sinn Féin on their terms."

But at the same time as the talk of contacts filled the air, the new RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan, delivered the latest in a series of police warnings that more "spectacular" IRA attacks were to be expected in Ulster and in Britain.

He added, however, that he believed an internal debate was going on within the republican movement. On reports that a full-scale IRA "army convention" had been held at the weekend, he was less sure than some security sources have been of late, commenting: "I think there was a meeting of sorts. I am not going to say it was a convention."

In Irish Taoiseach John Bruton, said he knew nothing of an IRA convention, but believed serious rethinking was going on within republicanism.



A day in the life: Keith from Skipton with his portrait at the '30 Days 30 lives' exhibition by photographer Barry Cawston which opens today for two weeks at the Candid Gallery, Islington, north London. The YMCA commissioned the series to illustrate its work with young adults. Photograph: John Lawrence

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Group 'undermined entire bank system'

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

An elite group of criminals plotted one of the biggest crimes in history and seriously undermined the entire banking system, a court heard yesterday.

The gang, including Kenneth Noye, the man wanted for the M25 road rage murder, joined forces to steal hundreds of millions of pounds from cash dispensers and the main banking computers. Confidential information from customers would have been downloaded using computer equipment, decrypted and used to make thousands of bogus cards. These would then be used to withdraw money from cash points throughout the world.

The court heard that the conspiracy was foiled when a computer expert turned informer, Martin Grant was recruited by the gang while serving 16 years for attempting to murder his wife and her child.

face up to seven years in jail when they raided the home of one of the conspirators in July 1995 and found five of the men along with computers ready to encode tens of thousands of cards.

Ann Cunnaw QC, for the prosecution at Southwark Crown Court, said: "Had the conspiracy succeeded, the banking system of this country would have been put at risk."

John Lloyd, a "close associate" of Noye was described by the judge as "one of the main organisers" of the scam.

Noye, 49, is the prime suspect for the M25 road-rage killing of Stephen Cameron, 21, who was stabbed to death at Swanley, Kent, in May.

The gang members are John Lloyd, 57, Paul Kidd, 36, Graham Moore, 32, Stephen Seton, 65, William Hayward, John Maguire, 36, all from Kent, and Stephen Moore, 41, of Leytonstone, east London.

The police caught the gang when they raided the home of one of the conspirators in July 1995 and found five of the men along with computers ready to encode tens of thousands of cards.

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Old will bear brunt of NHS shortfall

David Walker

Old people, the mentally ill and the disabled are those who will have to bear the brunt of any shortfall in health funding, health managers said yesterday.

The National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts has estimated English trusts need at least £200m less than 1 per cent of total NHS spending, to see them through to the end of the financial year in March. The NHS Trust Federation says that to avoid ex-

tending waiting lists or other cutbacks £300m extra is needed.

If these assessments prove accurate patients needing non-urgent surgery, such as hip replacements, would see their appointments deferred and the length of time they have to wait for their operations increased. Community care would also suffer. Hospital trusts would postpone paying their suppliers and put off planned building work.

But health trusts will try to sustain accident and emergency,

cardiac and children's services and ambulances are unlikely to be turned away. "Trusts providing acute care are acutely aware of the political sensitivities," said one manager cryptically.

Health trusts cannot end the year in deficit so, falling any increase in their budgets, they would be obliged to make savings in the five months that are left.

Many trusts have already exceeded the budgets for treatment allocated to them for the whole of 1996-97. If they continue to treat patients at current

rates, they run into the red. Though still only partially complete a survey of NHS trusts conducted jointly by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Health Financial Managers' Association, has found a third reporting a very difficult situation.

According to health analysts the root cause of this is the Government's decision to have the £33bn (for England) NHS budget on its estimate of spending rather than what trusts and authorities had spent by March

last. Some experts say the system started the year £180m short of what it needed to maintain last year's care.

After allowing for inflation, the amount of real growth in NHS spending for 1996-97 was minimal, which contradicted the Government's promise of growth.

Professor Chris Ham, of Birmingham University, an expert on health finance, said: "Needs and demand have continued growing, so it is not surprising that hospitals are running into serious problems."

significant shorts

Tories reject Brussels ban on leaded fuel

A European Commission proposal to ban leaded petrol from the end of 1999 is to be opposed by the Government.

The Commission strategy for reducing emissions from cars from 2000 was discussed by environment ministers last month, and agreement is expected next June.

But the transport minister, John Bowis, has told MPs that it is "unnecessary and inefficient to impose a ban on leaded petrol as proposed".

While the aim of reducing leaded petrol sales was "laudable", Mr Bowis said in a memorandum for the Commons European Legislation Committee that the British had over the last seven years used preferential legislation to promote leadless petrol sales.

That had contributed to a reduction in airborne lead of over 70 per cent. *Anthony Davies*

Drunken plane brawl may cost dear

A father and son who forced a holiday flight from Tenerife to Birmingham to divert after a mid-air brawl could face a bill of thousands of pounds from the airline.

The father, Mr. [Name], and son, Mr. [Name], were taken from the plane by police after a fight broke out between them. The father was injured and the son was taken to hospital.

A company spokesman described it as a "dispute and said it had been 'inhibited'."

He added that they could be liable for the cost of the extra fuel that had to be burned off for the plane to land in Lisbon.

The 200 other passengers on the plane were forced to endure a four-hour delay.

Drug hope for breast cancer

Women with advanced breast cancer will be able to live more than a year longer with a newly licensed drug, doctors said yesterday.

Docetaxel was given to patients for whom all other treatments had failed. However, doctors found that 56 per cent of the women responded to the treatment. Most survived for 390 days or more.

The results of the trial conducted at the Western General Hospital, in Edinburgh, were presented at a European cancer conference in Vienna yesterday.

Dr Robert Leonard, a consultant oncologist at Western General Hospital, said: "The result for those who responded to the drug was the possibility of an extra year's survival. Like most effective cancer drugs, docetaxel (also known as Taxotere) has distressing side effects, such as nausea and hair loss."

"In our experience, however, many of the patients felt much better having had their treatment. Although some suffered some side effects they were predictable and no worse than with many other similar drugs and, in many cases, manageable with other treatments." *Liz Hunt*

Gates warns party leaders on UK visit

Bill Gates, the multi-billionaire head of the Microsoft, the world's biggest PC software company, met John Major and Tony Blair in separate meetings yesterday during a 36-hour visit to the United Kingdom. According to Microsoft, he spoke to the two party leaders about the importance of government and business working together to improve the use of computers and the Internet, both in schools and in business.

But he warned that British businesses are not taking full advantage of the Internet, and could lose ground to international rivals. He also said that if children do not have access to computers, they could fall behind those growing up in better equipped schools abroad. *Charles Arthur*

Youth 'held fake gun to boy's head'

A 15-year-old youth has been accused of making threats to kill after an imitation gun was held to the head of a pupil in a school brawl.

The youth, now at college, will appear before Birmingham youth court next month after a fight between three pupils at a school in Acocks Green last week. He will face charges of making threats to kill and possessing an imitation firearm.

Dead addict 'feigned illness'

A policeman told an inquest yesterday that he thought a prisoner found dead in a cell had been feigning illness before his death.

PC David Ennis said he believed Leao Patterson, 31, had been trying to evade being interviewed over a shop robbery for which he had been arrested.

Patterson, a heroin addict, was found dead at Denton police station, Greater Manchester, four years ago.

A jury at an earlier inquest said that Patterson, of north London, had been unlawfully killed and that he should have been transferred to a prison hospital. It had heard the cause of death was "unascertainable".

But the police overturned the verdict in the High Court, which ordered a new hearing. Patterson's family allege he was beaten by officers. The inquest is expected to last two weeks.

Isle of Wight favours poll on self-rule

A majority of residents of the Isle of Wight favour holding a referendum on self-government, according to a Mori poll for the island's county council.

Seventy-three per cent said they would be in favour of the referendum - but most also said they would vote against independence.

Politicians on the island are concerned that the Government is doing nothing to combat high unemployment. They would like to make the island a free port and tax haven to boost investment. *Steve Boggan*

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Somewhere my love...Pasternak's passionate letters to his own Lara set to fetch £500,000



Poignant exchange during Stalin purges

Steve Beggan

On screen and off, it was one of the most enduring love affairs of the 20th century. Those who saw the screen version will remember Omar Sharif and Julie Christie, as Dr Zhivago and the enigmatic Lara, in the Russian revolution epic.

But in real life, too, there was love and tragedy. For the character of Lara in Boris Pasternak's Nobel prize-winning masterpiece, *Dr Zhivago*, was based on his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, the woman he loved until he died, in May, 1960.

The extent of their relationship, through Stalin's purges and periods of separation and imprisonment, has now come to light in a series of love letters, manuscripts and poems shortly to go on sale - at an estimated £500,000 - at Christie's in London.

In them, Pasternak confirms that Olga was indeed the Lara of his novel, and he demonstrates his love for her throughout their hardships. The two spent much time apart, he in Tbilisi, she in Leningrad, and his letters, discovered after Olga's death last year, often demonstrated a wish that they could be together.

"As always, I love you most deeply, but I'm sure you are neither aware of it, nor see any proof of it, and simply don't notice," he wrote in February, 1959.

"For my part, if I can hope that everything will remain as it was before our recent exchange of words, I would be in a state of perfect bliss. To imagine anything better than this would be inconceivable, beyond my power. I fancy I see something very, very good

ahead of me, something undefinable and undescribed, a part of which I experience in advance as I embrace and kiss you in my thoughts."

Pasternak was awarded the Nobel prize for literature after his novel surfaced in Italy in 1957 - the book was not published in the Soviet Union - but he was forced to turn it down.

He was continuously harassed by the authorities and Olga herself was twice imprisoned in a gulag because of her relationship with him.

After rejecting the prize, he wrote that he had been "changed by the years of Stalin's atrocities, at which I grieved before they were exposed."

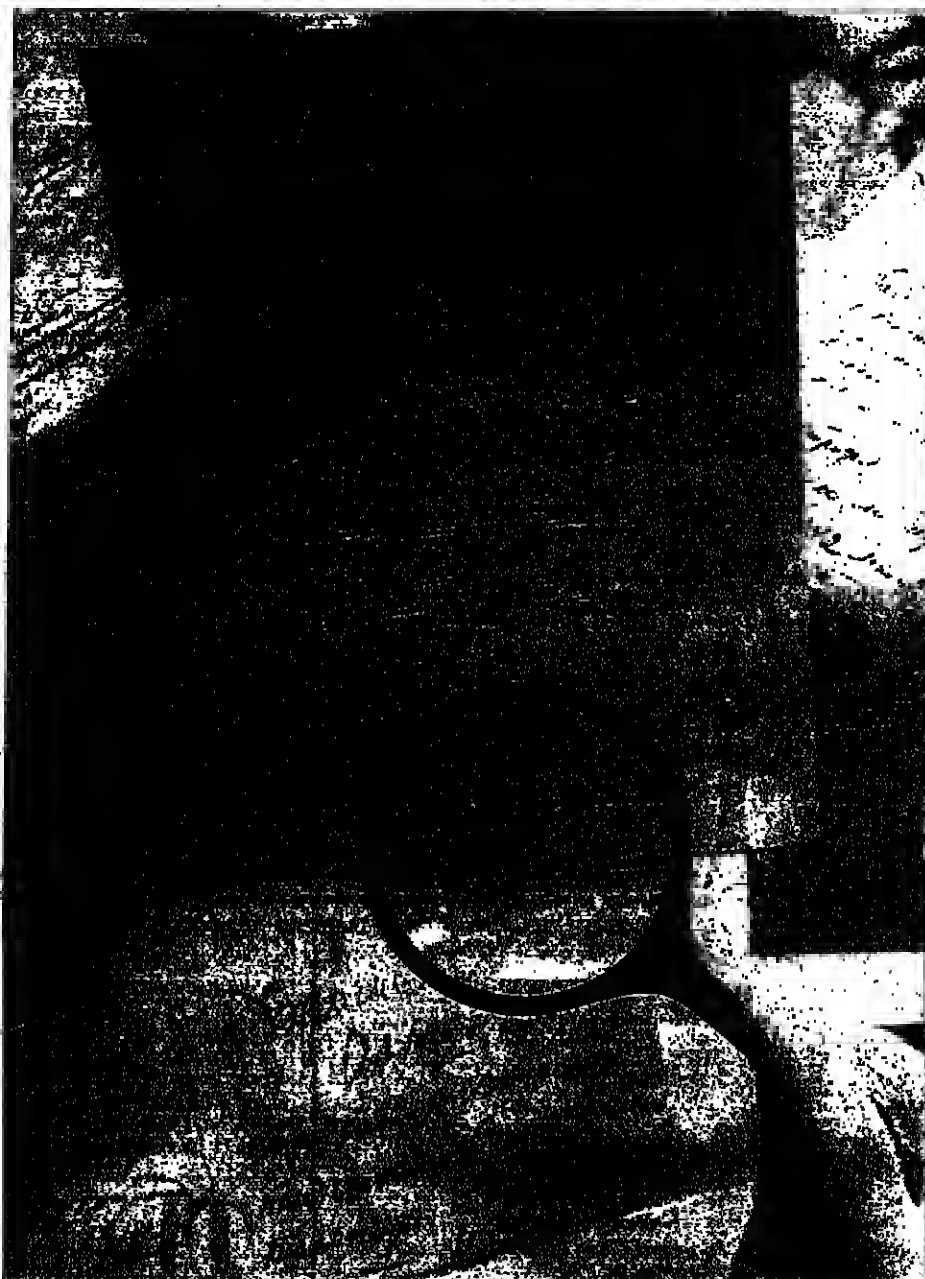
In his final letter, dated 5 May, 1960, he says he is convinced that he will recover, but goes on to describe the pain of his illness, which he cannot share.

"The razor falls from my hand from the stabs of pain in my shoulder-blade," he wrote. However, he adds: "The factual evidence (the cardiogram and so forth) make it possible to believe that I shall recover. I already feel a little better."

Pasternak died of a severe heart attack, brought on by lung cancer, at 11.40pm on May 30, 1960.

Although Christie admits that many of the letters and a collection of poems do not translate well, experts are nevertheless convinced that a figure of £500,000 will be reached by the sale.

Peter Collingridge, a specialist in books, manuscripts and Russian works of art at Christie's, described the love letters as "absolutely beautiful." They will go on sale on 27 November.



Life and love: Boris Pasternak's letters to his mistress, Olga Ivinskaya, (above, right) are a moving testimony to their affair and the basis for *Dr Zhivago*, made into a film starring Omar Sharif and Julie Christie (left). Photographs: Glynn Griffiths/Ronald Grant Archive

...as Kipling's pile of rubbish goes on sale

Hazel Cavendish

Previously unpublished letters and manuscripts by Rudyard Kipling, stolen from him by a disgruntled secretary, go on sale today at a Chichester auction house. The papers give a remarkable insight into one of Britain's most popular authors and are expected to prompt international interest.

Overlooked for almost a century, the documents narrowly escaped destruction when they were discovered in a chest of drawers delivered for a country sale in Sussex. When a carrier delivering the chest inquired "Does anyone want this pile of rubbish from the drawers?" A saleroom porter recognised the two brown paper parcels of documents as a significant collection of a writer's work, containing 40 manuscripts, letters and documents.

They reveal Kipling's dislike for the founder of the Salvation Army, General Booth, his hatred of seeing his work adapted for stage plays and his refusal to allow fox hunting on his land because it might be damaged.

The archive also includes several heavily corrected versions of his story *With The Night Mail*, based on Kipling's sea voyage from the US to England, which appeared in *McClure's Magazine* in November, 1905. The various versions of the story will be invaluable to students of his work in showing how Kipling revised and re-revised a story before he allowed it to be printed.

Other scripts include two short stories which appeared in the *Daily Express* of 1900, *A Burgher of the Free State* and *The Way that He Took*, as well as an

early version of *The Outsider* with autographed alterations.

His secretary, Miss K E Parker, quit and took the papers from Bateman's, Kipling's country home in Burwash, East Sussex, after complaining he and his wife treated her "like a common typist" while expecting "work of quality".

The collection was bought at a junk sale around 30 years ago by a local collector who lived on the Sussex coast. They were sent to the auction room by the collector's widow.

The author and poet is best known for his poem *If*, which emerged as Britain's favourite in a national poll last year.

Kipling enthusiasts from the United States and Canada are expected to join many private collectors from Britain bidding for the collection of annotated letters and drafts of short stories.

Two of the main bidders are expected to be the University of Sussex, which has one of the world's largest collections of Kipling's work and possibly the University of Dalhousie, in Canada, which is known to have a substantial holding of Kipling manuscripts.

Leonie Ormond, Professor of Victorian Studies at the University of London said: "I think it's very exciting, absolutely riveting."

Lisa Lewis, meeting secretary of the Kipling society, said the writer and his wife would authorise some versions of his work that were different than what was published, but never marked with his handwriting.

Instead, they would give leather-bound volumes of material to universities and others. "Mrs Kipling was a bit of a control freak."

BT pulls plug on phone museum

Chris Goddard
Business Correspondent

While BT executives toast their £13bn takeover deal with the US long distance phone giant MCI, the company is considering pulling the plug on Britain's national telephone museum due to lack of funds.

The BT museum, tucked away beneath a concrete multi-storey car park near Blackfriars Bridge in London, houses countless treasures in the UK's proud technological history from the discovery of the telephone in the 1830s.

Saved from closure earlier this year it has been passed, unwanted, around BT's internal bureaucracy and has yet to be allocated further funding for the company's next financial year, which begins in April.

Insiders are convinced the museum, which employs six staff, will not survive, despite attracting 23,000 visitors last year. "We just don't fit into the corporate structure any more. They see us as a drain on budgets," said one source.

The cash shortfall is thought to be in the region of just £500,000, a drop in the ocean compared with the £2.2bn BT is proposing to pay out to its 2.3 million shareholders in a special dividend next autumn. Ironically, the cash gap is virtually the same as the annual basic salary of BT's chief executive, Sir Peter Bonfield.

Staff at the museum have already begun the sad process of giving away exhibits which, though not valuable in money terms, have a priceless place in British industrial history. Thousands of old telephones, switchboards and memorabilia are housed in an unmanned warehouse near Heathrow Airport. They include 17 vintage GPO vans and crates of bakelite handsets which have never even been catalogued.

The Museum of National Telephony opened in 1982, the year after British Telecom was split off from the Post Office as the precursor to privatisation. It takes visitors through Britain's dominant contribution to the history of telephony, from the huge expansion of the telephone network during the 1840s railway boom to digital communications revolution of the 1990s.

BT said last night that a final decision on the museum's future had yet to be taken. "One can never guarantee the everlasting future of anything, but at the moment it's business as usual," a spokesman said.

My hellish journey across Europe, by kidnapped mother

Hugh Pope
Istanbul

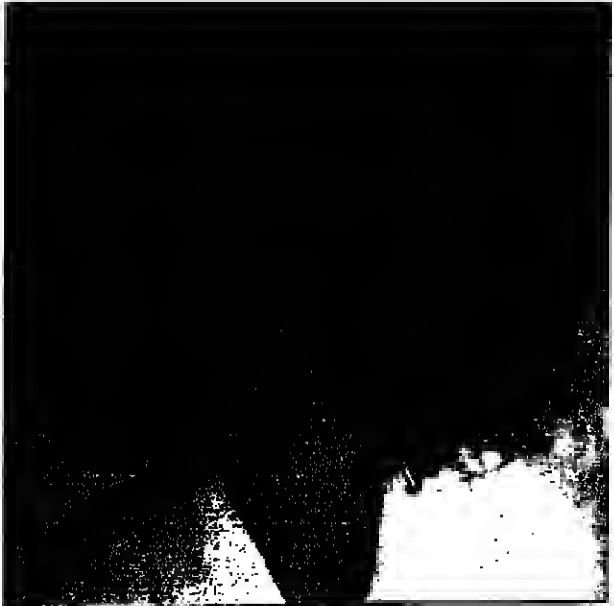
The bizarre three-day ordeal of Hertfordshire secretary Joanne Norris ended yesterday when a Turkish court released both her and the estranged Turkish husband who had kidnapped her and smuggled her across the breadth of Europe.

"I'm not too bad now. My husband did not hurt me. I have absolutely no idea why he did it, but maybe his motive was to get the family back together again. The court released us both after I said I would not be pressing charges," said Ms Norris, 30.

"I even asked him to drive me to the airport so I could go home. He agreed, but I think the police may supervise that," she added, speaking by telephone from a courtroom in the town of Edirne, close to the Turkish border with Bulgaria.

Ms Norris said she was alone when she was seized from her home at Knebworth in Hertfordshire on Friday night. She said her boyfriend was tied up when he stumbled in on the kidnapping. She was then put in the back of a caravan or caravante and smuggled through the Channel Tunnel on the Shuttle.

"I couldn't be seen or draw attention to myself. They had hidden me under a coat," Ms Norris said.



Joanne Norris 'I am not too bad now, but I have no idea why my husband kidnapped me' Photograph: PA

She was met on arrival in France by her husband and her eight-year-old son, who lives in Turkey in the legal custody of his father. Ms Norris said she had left her husband in 1994 after eight years of living together in the Turkish resort town of Kemer.

A friend of her husband's was also with them as they then drove non-stop across Europe towards Turkey. Turkish police said her husband was using her old Turkish passport to get her

through international frontiers. "Three times I thought about trying to escape, but it was the middle of the night, I had no money and no passport. What was I supposed to do?" Ms Norris said.

Finally they arrived at the Turkish border post with Bulgaria on Sunday afternoon. Turkish police there had been tipped off about the kidnapping by a fax from Interpol. They arrested the group and sent them

to Edirne for questioning.

"The Turkish police were basically sympathetic, but like lots of people in Turkey, they could not understand why I would not get back together with my husband and son. They are very much family orientated here," Ms Norris said. She said that after the court released them her first priority would be to find a seat on a plane back to London, even though that meant leaving her son behind.

"Of course I have hard feelings about all this," Ms Norris said. Turkish law usually awards custody of children to the father, and Ms Norris said that one day she might sue for custody of the child in the Turkish courts.

Two men appeared in court yesterday charged with kidnapping Ms Norris from her home. Derek Neale, 34, of Devon Green, Vange, Basildon, Essex, and Derek Lazell, 43, of London Road, Basildon, Essex, are jointly charged with the kidnapping and unlawful imprisonment. Neale and Lazell, both ex-servicemen, only spoke once to confirm their names during the five-minute appearance at Stevenage magistrates' court.

Both were remanded in custody for a week, to appear at the same court on 11 November. There was no application for bail. Hertfordshire police said that a third man, aged 27, had been arrested in connection with the kidnapping.

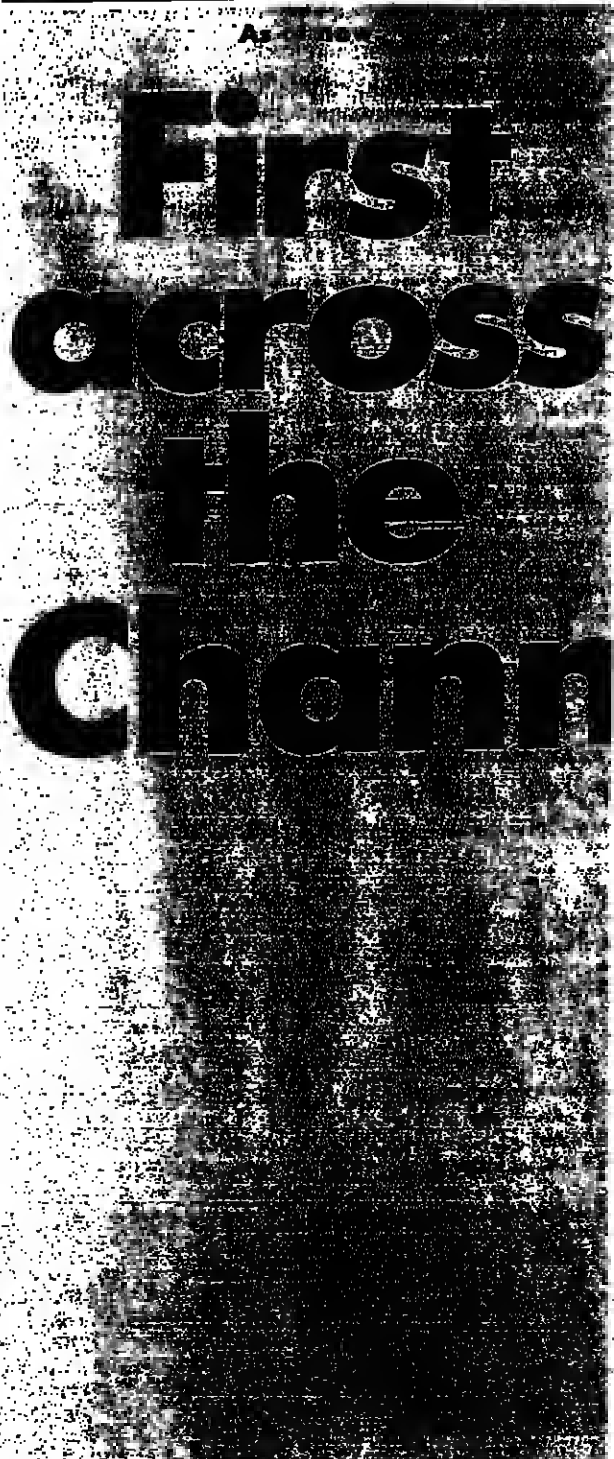
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House music: Members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra giving a recital in the sitting room of Heather Kemp's council home in Hastings, East Sussex, as part of an initiative by the local council to increase awareness of classical music. Photograph: Andrew Hasson



"I saw an accident when a friend fell from the truck taking us to the plantation. The tyre ran over his leg and he was sent to the company dispensary. They amputated his leg. He got no compensation and had to bury a plastic leg with his own money. The man has not worked since the accident." PINEAPPLE PLANTATION WORKER, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

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Court told of official's 'Pretty Woman' relationship

The taxman, the hooker and a love story

Graham Ball

A senior Inland Revenue official became so besotted with an escort agency woman that he lavished thousands of pounds of gifts on her, including designer clothes, expensive watches and Mediterranean holidays, an Old Bailey court was told yesterday.

Michelle Corrigan, a former model, was giving evidence in the trial of Michael Alcock, an Inland Revenue inspector who is accused of taking bribes.

Miss Corrigan said she was introduced to Mr Alcock, a married man, by Brian Alwan, an oil dealer with whom she used to have sex for money.

"He asked me if I'd be interested in meeting one of his friends and I said yes. I didn't have a name but was told that he was English," she said. She met Mr Alwan at an apartment in Maida Vale, north-west London, where he gave her a white envelope containing £200. He then introduced her to the tax inspector and left. After the first meeting Mr Alcock contacted Miss Corrigan and arranged to see her again.

She said that at the second meeting Mr Alcock was dropped off at the Maida Vale address in Mr Alwan's Mercedes. John Black, for the prosecution, has told the court that Mr Alcock had previously investigated Mr Alwan's tax affairs. Mr Alcock, 47, Mr Alwan and David Shamoun, a wealthy property developer, deny 17 charges of corruption.

Miss Corrigan said she met Mr Alcock in Maida Vale about 12 more times and on each occasion Mr Alcock gave her money for sex. "Every time I met him he gave me a cheque or cash, sometimes £150, sometimes £200 but it was usually about £200," she said.

The jury was shown a cheque for £3,000 signed by Mr Alcock in 1990 to benefit Miss Corrigan. She said that the money was to help her to buy a car. "I bought a Peugeot 205GT and Mr Alcock also helped me to pay for the insurance," she said.

At one point in their relationship it was alleged that Mr Alcock used his influence with



Michael Alcock: 'Became besotted'

Miss Corrigan to arrange a woman for Christopher Furze, a junior colleague, and that Miss Corrigan slept with Mr Alcock and Mr Furze slept with the other woman.

However, over a period of months a relationship developed from being that of one between a prostitute and a client to one that could better be described as an affair. This development occurred around the time that Mr Alcock took Miss Corrigan on the first of two holidays in September 1991. The couple first stayed at a luxury villa close to the Marbella beach club in southern Spain. Later they enjoyed another luxury break in Majorca.

The court was told Mr Al-



Michelle Corrigan: Given many gifts

cock also paid £1,500 for six months' rent for Miss Corrigan's flat in Portsmouth and cleared a £1,000 credit card debt.

The jury was shown a receipt for £675 for a watch bought by Mr Alcock for Miss Corrigan in December 1991.

Mr Black asked her to describe some of the other gifts she received from the tax inspector, whose salary at the time of his suspension was £45,000. She said: "He bought me clothes, shoes, make-up, coats. They were generally designer outfits costing between £300 and £600. He also bought me a coat for £400 from Harvey Nichols."

Mr Black has claimed that the money to finance these gifts came from "ghosts", wealthy foreign businessmen who had paid Mr Alcock to conclude favourable tax settlements.

Miss Corrigan said that throughout their relationship, which lasted approximately three years, she did not know what Mr Alcock did for a living and believed that he was a financial adviser. Just prior to the end of their affair in 1992 she said Mr Alcock told her he was putting money away for their future. She said: "I started looking at properties in the Portsmouth area, I thought we were in love."

Anthony Arledge, QC, for the defence, compared Mr Alcock's affair with Miss Corrigan to the plot line of the Hollywood film *Pretty Woman*, and Miss Corrigan agreed with Mr Arledge when he said that while the couple began in a client and prostitute relationship they quickly fell in love.

Miss Corrigan, a tall slender figure, was wearing a bright green jacket and matching green miniskirt. She said that she did not consider herself a prostitute. She said: "I consider a prostitute as someone hanging around on a street corner and advertising in phone boxes. I was introduced to these people and they would give me money. That is not the same as hanging around on the corner of the street looking for it. I was quite happy to sit there talking to him. I did not want to dive in, take my clothes off and jump on top of him."

The trial continues tomorrow.

Theft gangs target church furniture

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

Criminals are targeting churches and stealing valuable furniture, which they sell in antique markets and shops in Britain and overseas, the police said yesterday.

The warning follows a spate of break-ins at churches in the south-west of England. Previously thieves have tended to concentrate on stealing church ornaments, such as crosses and chalices.

But in the past few weeks furniture has been seized from more than two dozen remote churches in the West Country. In one police division, north Devon, 28 churches have been broken into so far this year.

Some of the items stolen from the churches in north Cornwall and north and mid-Devon may have been sold

abroad, particularly to the United States, the Devon and Cornwall police believe.

Ornate tables and chairs were among many items taken from the churches while they were open to the public.

The recent theft of a 19th-century dark oak chair worth £1,500 taken from St Mary's at Molland, near South Molton, north Devon, was the latest in a series of raids on four parish churches under the Rev Bob Shorter.

Thieves had struck five times in three years at his four churches on the edge of Exmoor, taking furniture including a captain's chair, two Victorian side-tables and a Victorian chest of drawers, together worth hundreds of pounds.

"It does rather appear thieves are coming looking for stuff that they presumably have a market for. Churches are

easy targets - and most of us feel you cannot get much lower than stealing from a church," he said.

He had been told that thieves sometimes posed as visitors to see what was in the church, before returning to steal.

"So far our churches are left open and we are reluctant to lock them, but we are now having to think more about that," said Mr Shorter.

In recent years churches throughout the country have suffered from an upsurge in thefts.

In Norfolk, where there are a large number of isolated churches, some of the stolen goods have been traced to antique markets abroad, including a stained-glass window that was recovered in Japan.

Chief Supt John Savage, of Norfolk constabulary's crime prevention unit, said: "We have a lot of medieval churches, which contain very old and valuable furniture."

"Break-ins can hit small village communities very hard - it's rather like an assault on them."

In Suffolk the police published a crime-prevention booklet for vicars and church wardens following a spate of thefts. Since improvements to security the number of break-ins has fallen dramatically.

Country churches were a favourite target for antique and furniture thieves, said Brian King, of Ecclesiastical Insurance, which covers 95 per cent of Anglican churches.

"Since the 1970s antique prices have rocketed, therefore churches have been attracted thieves' attention as being a good source," he said. Much of what was taken was sold abroad. Attacks on churches had risen, with insurance payouts rising from £3m in 1989 to £4.5m by 1992. Mr Shorter recommended security marking and photographing valuables; putting fakes on display instead of the originals, or locking them away altogether.

DAILY POEM

One of the first poems to be written underneath the English Channel or maybe the first.

By Adrian Mitchell

*The bones of galleons and their wide-eyed crews,
Haunted by jelly-fish and purple mussels -
They're overhead, stuck in historic ooze -
As our train mumbles through the dark to Brussels.*

Coming Back Again

*As our train mumbles through the dark from Brussels -
They're overhead, stuck in historic ooze -
Haunted by jelly-fish and purple mussels -
The bones of galleons and their wide-eyed crews.*

Adrian Mitchell's *Collected Poems* (Bloodaxe) were published at the end of last month, amongst them this short poem written on the Eurostar just 10 days before publication. Mitchell made his reputation in the late 1960s as performance poet of what used to be referred to as "agitprop". His most nakedly political poems - about nuclear war, Vietnam, prisons and racism - became part of the folklore of the Left, sung and recited at demonstrations and mass rallies. But there has always been a softer, more fantastical side to his output, and his ability to re-experience the world as a child is a rare gift.

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Blair gets backing for draft manifesto

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Tony Blair yesterday won Labour on notice for an early election after more than 90 per cent of party members voted for the party's draft election manifesto.

He said the Government had damaged the country by drift and dithering, adding that Labour would do all it could to push the Prime Minister into an early election. "I don't know whether we are going to be able to push them out before they jump but if we possibly can, we will," he said.

The death of Barry Porter, the Tory MP for Wirral South, reduced the Government's notional majority to one but the Tories have had comfortable majorities in voting in the Commons in recent weeks.

The Labour leader refused to commit his party to "guerrilla tactics", getting a maximum turnout of MPs and forcing votes at all hours, which were used by the Tories under Margaret Thatcher to weaken the then Labour government of James Callaghan before they delivered the final blow in 1979. "We will pursue any tactics that are responsible," Mr Blair said. "The sooner this government is brought to an end the better because they are not doing anything."

If Mr Blair's commitment to bringing down the Government is to be fulfilled his team will have to do more to harry it in the final session of Parliament. There are fewer late-night sittings and a confidence vote to bring down the Government

would require the support of all the minor parties including the Ulster Unionists.

The draft manifesto, *New Life for Britain*, will form the basis of the platform on which Labour goes into the election but the final manifesto will be drawn up by the leadership when the campaign is launched.

"This massive 'yes' vote gives us the best possible platform in the run-up to the election," the Labour leader said. "I am saying to every member of the party, 'It is time to raise our game once more. It is time to build on our success and step up a gear'."

Mr Blair and John Prescott, the deputy leader, hailed the endorsement of the draft manifesto as a remarkable result. Mr Blair said it meant that the head and the body of the party were marching in step.

There were, however, more than 11,000 members who voted against though it is not known whether any MPs did so. The Labour leader and his deputy both took part in a last-minute telephone canvass of supporters and dismissed doubts about the fairness of the ballot as cynicism on the part of the press and critics outside the party.

The results were: Individual party members: yes, 95 per cent (218,023); no, 5 per cent (11,286); turnout, 61 per cent (230,402). Number eligible to vote, 380,688.

Affiliated organisations, including unions: yes, 92.2 per cent; no, 7.8 per cent; turnout, 24.2 per cent. Number eligible to vote, 2,613,690.

What party members voted for

Cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5- to 7-year-olds, by using money saved from the assisted places scheme.

Labour says this will cost £77m a year, but children already at private schools on subsidised places will be allowed to finish, and it would still cost the state sector to take children who would have gone on the £139m scheme next year, so the initial savings will be small - although the cost is relatively trivial anyway. Fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders, by halving the time from arrest to sentencing.

The average wait for young offenders is four-and-a-half months, although it might be different for the persistent sort. The speed-up is supposed to be paid for out of legal aid savings which are unconvincing but, again, the cost is small. Cut NHS waiting lists by treating an extra 100,000 patients, as a first step, by releasing £100m saved from NHS red tape.

On present trends, the NHS can expect to treat 240,000 more patients next year than this year anyway. To raise that to 340,000 is a demanding target, which will cut waiting lists.

The £100m savings are again unlikely: the Government ditched three months ago the requirement for internal invoices in the NHS market - the main "paperchase" which Labour hoped to abolish. Get 250,000 under-25-year-olds off benefit and into work, by using money from a windfall levy on the privatised utilities.

The only pledge that costs big money, about £1.5bn, but why ask electricity and water consumers and shareholders, including pension funds, to pay for it? Set tough rules for government spending and borrowing; ensure low inflation; strengthen the economy, so that interest rates are as low as possible. Meaningless guff.

Grandeers warn Howard against 'race for votes'

John Rentoul
Political Correspondent

Michael Howard was warned by two Conservative former Home Secretaries yesterday that his attempt to outflank Labour on crime was in danger of going too far.

Both Douglas Hurd and, more surprisingly, Kenneth Baker criticised the Crime Bill, the centrepiece of the Government's pre-election legislative programme, in the Commons.

Mr Hurd, who was Home Secretary 1985-89, warned Mr Howard and his Labour opposite number, Jack Straw, "Common sense, and the latest opinion research, suggest there's not really much profit for any of us - in treating any of these matters as a race for votes."

He asked if it was "realistic" to expect judges to give shorter sentences which would actually be served under Mr Howard's plans for "honest sentencing". Mr Hurd told MPs he thought the "expectation would prove fallible", because judges are under such pressure to hand out long sentences - pressure that was adding, he said. Mr Baker, Home Secretary 1990-92, said that the evidence of experience of minimum sentences in the United States was "at best not proven". He ex-

pressed concern at the possibility that second-time rapists might have an incentive to kill their victims.

And he said there was a danger in the Bill that the Prison Service would be diverted from its role in trying to restore criminals to society.

Meanwhile, Mr Straw, Labour's home affairs spokesman, found himself mocked on both sides of the House of Commons for his failure to oppose the Bill.

The abstention of Labour leaders in last night's vote on the Bill last night marked the death of part of the party's soul, said Brian Sedgmore, the left-wing Labour MP and a barrister.

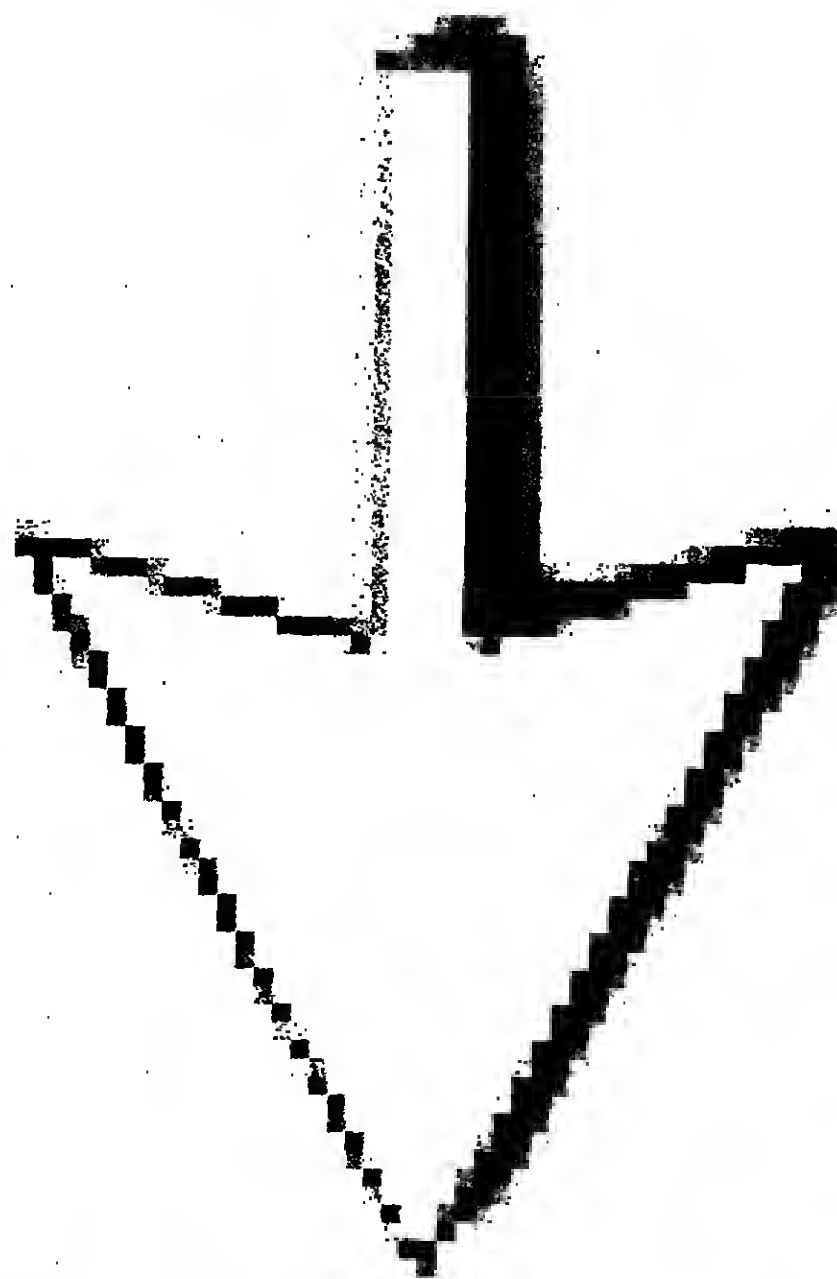
Announcing his intention to vote against the Bill, he said: "This Bill denies many of the basic principles of justice. It is one which will lead to the expenditure of billions of pounds of public money on building and running new prisons whose only discernible purpose is that of vengeance. Led by Jack Straw, Labour's front bench has responded lamentably. This is a shameful night for New Labour, a night when part of its soul died."

He added: "The benches used to contain a liberal tradition on penal matters - we recognise that as part of a consistent tradition. All that has been thrown to the winds."



Thought process: Sir James Goldsmith during an hour-long phone-in on Talk Radio yesterday. He said that his Referendum Party would be ready to fight the general election today if it was called and he emphasised that his family charitable foundation would be ready to give £20m if it proved necessary. So far his costs are £1.5m. Photograph: Andrew Buerman

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news

Jail escorts free drug dealer after threat of being injected with Aids-infected blood, a new tactic increasingly used by criminals

Deadly hypodermics become new shotguns

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

The escape from prison at the weekend of a drug dealer whose brother was a notorious gang leader saw the use of one of the Aids-era's more sinister weapons – a blood-filled syringe.

Syringes filled with blood have been used in dozens of inner-city Dublin robberies in recent years according to police. Criminals frequently claim the blood is Aids-infected when threatening their victims.

Michael Cahill, 33, the

younger brother of Martin Cahill, the late Dublin gang leader known as The General who was murdered by the IRA in August 1994, escaped from a Garda van outside Dublin on Sunday.

A heroin addict, he was serving a four-and-a-half-year sentence for a drugs conviction. He was being moved, handcuffed to a warder, to Cork Prison from Mountjoy in Dublin following a disturbance there on Saturday evening.

The Department of Justice yesterday began an inquiry into

the escape, which occurred when Cahill reportedly held the syringe against the head of one of the prison officers in the van and shouted: "He has a wife and kids, **** it, I will give it to him!"

The unarmed officers released him and he ran into traffic and tried, unsuccessfully, to hijack a car before fleeing into fields.

The inquiry will try to establish how the syringe was taken into the van, and whether Saturday's fracas at Mountjoy was staged to facilitate the transfer.



Lethal, and small: Syringes are hard for warders to detect

A few months ago another prisoner made his escape from a courthouse by using a syringe to threaten a guard, and in April another Dublin criminal, Thomas "Bomber" Clarke, also escaped from a prison van when

gunmen rammed it. Chris Finnegan, national secretary of the Garda Federation, said "more than 10" gardai had been stabbed with syringes, though none had so far tested

HIV-positive as a result.

A colleague "went through a terrible torment for some time [while awaiting the result of an Aids test]. It's more frightening than an actual weapon. They [syringes] have now become the preferred way of doing jump-over [cash robberies in shops]."

Mr Finnegan estimated the use of syringes in robberies and other crimes had been increasing steadily for five or six years.

The most common victims, and the experience has led some north inner-city Dublin

shop-owners to close businesses. Other victims included two Italian tourists who were held up by a syringe-wielding thief who broke into their room in a luxurious hotel late at night.

Mr Finnegan called for armed gardai in a follow-up car to shadow prison vans in the same way as large cash consignments were escorted. He said it appeared no security lessons had been learned from the earlier Clarke escape.

Liz O'Donnell, justice spokeswoman of the opposition Progressive Democrats, said

there had been 11 escapes from this year and demanded tighter security. She said the justice minister, Nora O'Brien, should explain how the prisoner got the syringe into the van, when there should have been a search.

A spokesman for Ireland's Prison Officers Association called for pepper gas and mace to be provided to prison escorts and for shackles to be used in transporting dangerous prisoners. Routine searches did not deal with the threat as prisoners had repeatedly concealed syringes inside the body, he said.

Happiness of the long-distance traveller as the sun goes down on the fly and flop holiday

Simon Calder in Istanbul hears that cheaper flights are hitting traditional tourist resorts

British tourists are turning their backs on the beaches, particularly among Mediterranean holiday resorts. Travel agents were told yesterday that 1 million fewer "fly and flop" European beach holidays were sold this summer. Greece, Malta and Cyprus are suffering especially, compared with more exotic destinations. And among skiers, France and Austria are being overhauled as the most popular winter sports destinations by Italy.

The Istanbul convention of the Association of British Travel Agents heard that holiday-makers are extending their horizons dramatically. The market research organisation Stat MR says United Kingdom visitors to Mexico have more than trebled over the past year, and bookings for next year are already twice as high again. In contrast, Cyprus lost one in five British holidaymakers last winter and is 11 per cent down on bookings for the coming winter.

Recent violence on the Green Line separating the Republic from the self-styled Turkish Republic of North Cyprus may have contributed to the decline. But Len Mooney of the tour operator Sunworld said the trend towards long-haul travel is responsible. "Cyprus is suffering from cheaper long-haul holidays, particularly in the Caribbean."

Price remains the prime concern of British tourists. The only leading destination to buck the trend of a declining package holiday market this summer was Turkey. It added 15 per cent in visitor numbers, compared with a fall of 24 per cent for Greece. This week, Turkey was revealed to be the cheapest of all 20 OECD countries for tourists, with the cost of holiday-making just after that of the UK. The local currency is so weak that British visitors can become lira millionaires simply by changing £6.50.

Among skiers, price is also crucial. Bookings for the coming winter show Italy ahead of the traditional destinations. France and Austria, Bulgaria is performing strongly – with nearly double the number of bookings compared with last year – while Switzerland has lost almost half its market share.

Overall, numbers of winter sports holidays are a quarter lower than at the peak eight years ago, but Kevin Ivis of First Choice said the decline has now reversed. "Snow-boarding has helped to bring young people into the market."

Travellers' perceptions of risk have affected some parts of the world significantly. Florida has



Trading places: The table below shows holidays to destinations such as India (above) are rising while those to the Mediterranean are falling Photographs: John Voos/David Rose

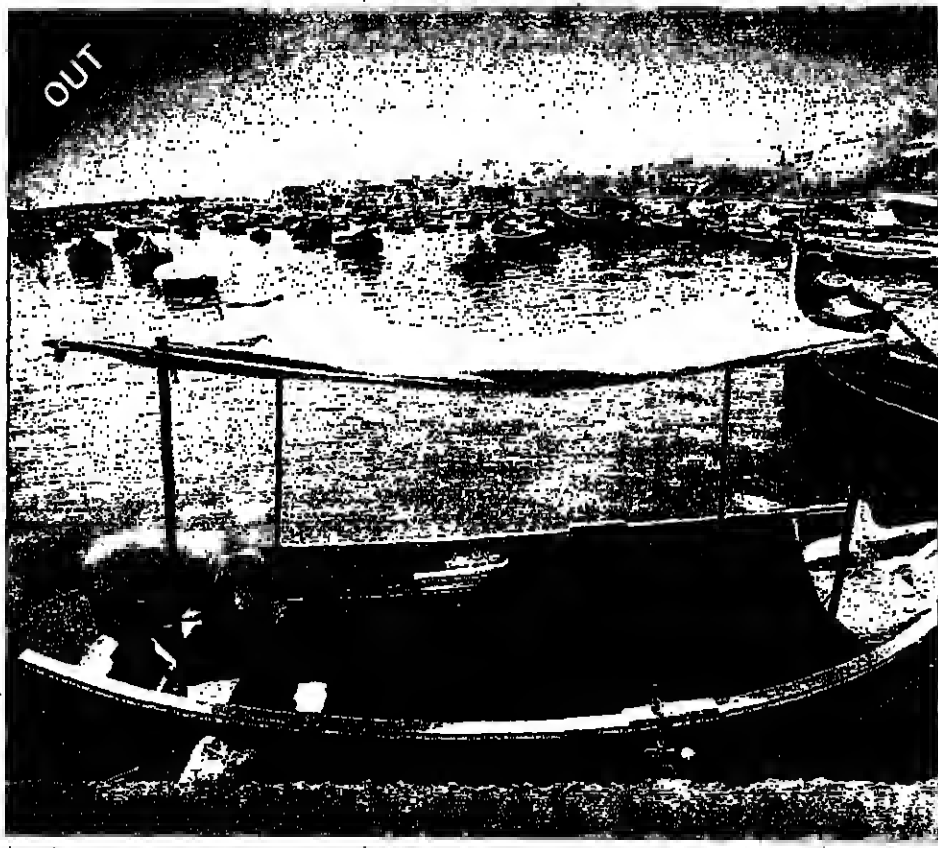
LONG HAUL			SKI			SUMMER SUN		
95/96 season			95/96 season			1996 season		
Total	%	Change*	Total	%	Change*	Total	%	Change*
USA	61.2	24	Canada	5.4	247	Spain	52.0	-14
France	34.3	26	USA	5.2	123	Balearics	27.2	-13
Other USA	17.0	27	France	24.4	-10	Canaries	12.6	-18
Mexico	2.2	236	Austria	22.4	-15	Mainland	12.2	-11
Caribbean	19.2	20	Italy	19.0	37	Greece	18.5	-24
Canada	6.0	14	Andorra	8.1	21	Turkey	12.3	15
E/South Africa	3.9	-12	Switzerland	8.6	-45	Cyprus	5.1	-25
India	3.1	42	Bulgaria	5.7	280	Portugal	5.1	-15

not yet recovered from the spate of attacks on tourists three years ago. Southern and Eastern Africa lost one in eight British visitors mostly because of a decline in tourism to Kenya. Conversely, India appears once again to be perceived

as "safe", with an increase of 42 per cent in the past year.

One tour operator warned of the dangers of trying to cash in on the rise of exotic holidays. Roger Hespe of British Airways Holidays told: "Don't trash the market – don't do what you

did to the short-haul market." The travel industry got a taste of its own medicine after the convention closed yesterday. Several delegates turned up at Istanbul airport to find the British Airways flight to Heathrow was overbooked.



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Families have lost £3 a week since the election

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The average council-house family has lost more than £3 a week in net income since the last election, according to the latest calculations from Whitehall.

The figures, in a Department of Social Security *Abstract of Statistics*, belie Treasury propaganda that the average family is £700 a year better off than the last election. Claim and counter-claim about family prosperity is a key battleground for the election as the Tories try to persuade voters they are significantly better off and should not risk Labour ruining that new-found wealth.

Michael Jack, a Treasury minister, said in a written Commons reply: "Real take-home pay for a one-earner family on average earnings was £292 per week in 1991-92, and is expected to rise to £305 per week in 1996-97."

"The 1996-97 income of a family on average earnings is up £700 a year after the effects of tax and inflation when compared with that of 1991-92."

That Treasury reply could contain a number of flaws: the year 1991-92 does not give an accurate definition of the timing of the last election, and average earnings for 1996-97 can only be "expected" because the year does not end until March.

However, the *Abstract of Statistics* provides actual figures for average earnings in April 1992, at the time of the last election, and last April. It shows a gross increase of £50.10p per week to £390.20 over the four years of John Major's government.

In real terms, after inflation has been taken into account, the increase is £14.08, or £732.16 a year before tax. After tax that increase is certain to be much less. For a one-earner family with two children living in council housing, with an average weekly pay slip of £390.20, net income last April was £253.28 a week - compared with the real-terms figure of £256.49 in April 1992 - after housing costs had been deducted. That official DSS calculation includes average council-house rent, council tax, income tax, national insurance contributions, and

a full claim for any available benefits. That family was not better off last April than it was at the last election.

On the same basis, a single mother with one child, working on average women's earnings - of £280.70 a week last April - is £4.29 a week worse off, in real terms, after housing costs, than in April 1992. The Government's General Household Survey shows one-fifth of all households live in council or new-town rented housing.

Another 40 per cent of households have mortgages and there is no doubt that many will be considerably better off as a result of mortgage interest rate cuts, which have reduced annual payments on a £33,000 mortgage by about £1,340 a year since the last election. But that bonus has to be offset by the reduction in the rate at which the tax allowance, mortgage interest at source, is paid. Its reduction by the present government from 25 per cent to 15 per cent has cost the average mortgage payer about £500 a year.

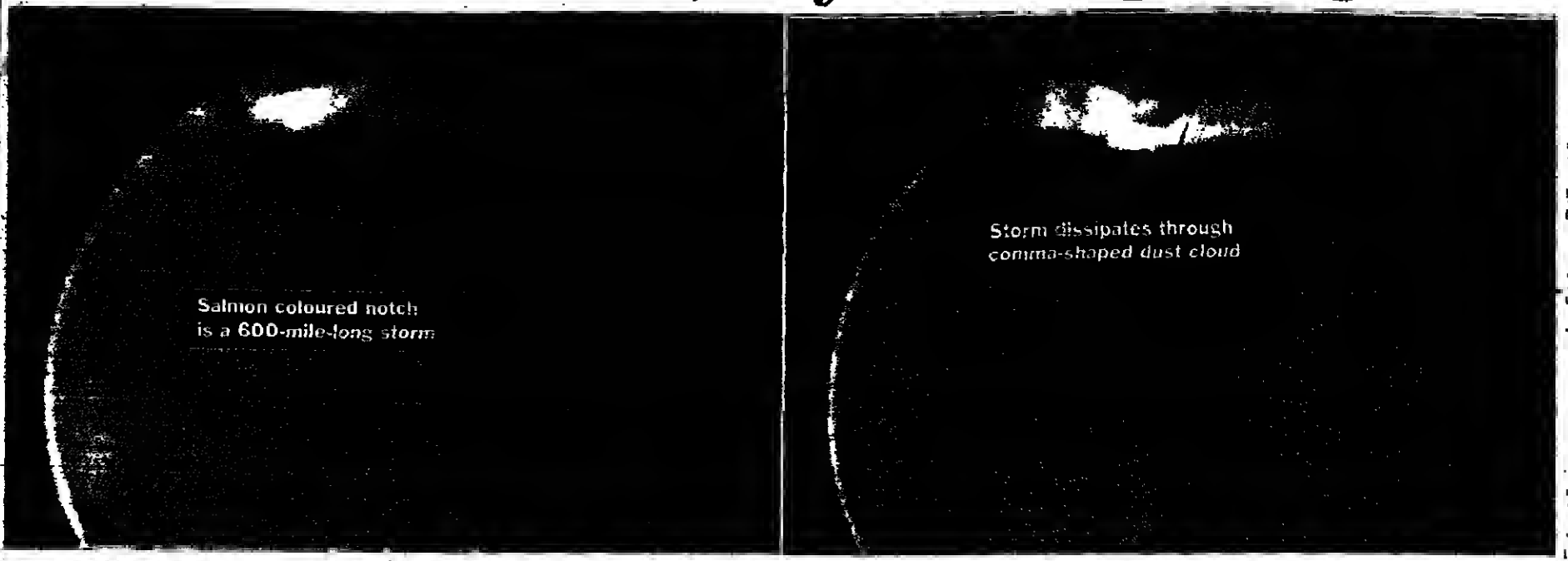
The Conservatives possibly prefer to use 1991-92 as their base line for "feel-good" calculations because there was a significant surge in net income between 1991-92 and 1992-93.

Labour however uses 1992-93 as its base year, possibly because that more than halves the net increase in living standards, from the Tories' £700 to little more than £380 a year for the average family, after pay rises, taxes and prices have been taken into account.

Labour pointed out yesterday that the average family - with one earner on average earnings and two children - was £2.56 a week worse off last year, when compared with 1992-93, after inflation had been taken into account. A Labour spokesman pointed to the Treasury's own figures, showing that that family's net income, after all taxes and benefits, was £296.78p a week in 1995-96 compared with an equivalent in real terms of £299.34 a week in 1992-93.

On that basis, it would appear the average family was worse off whether they lived in rented council housing or whether they had a mortgage.

If there is life on Mars, they're having a rough time



Charles Arthur
Science Editor

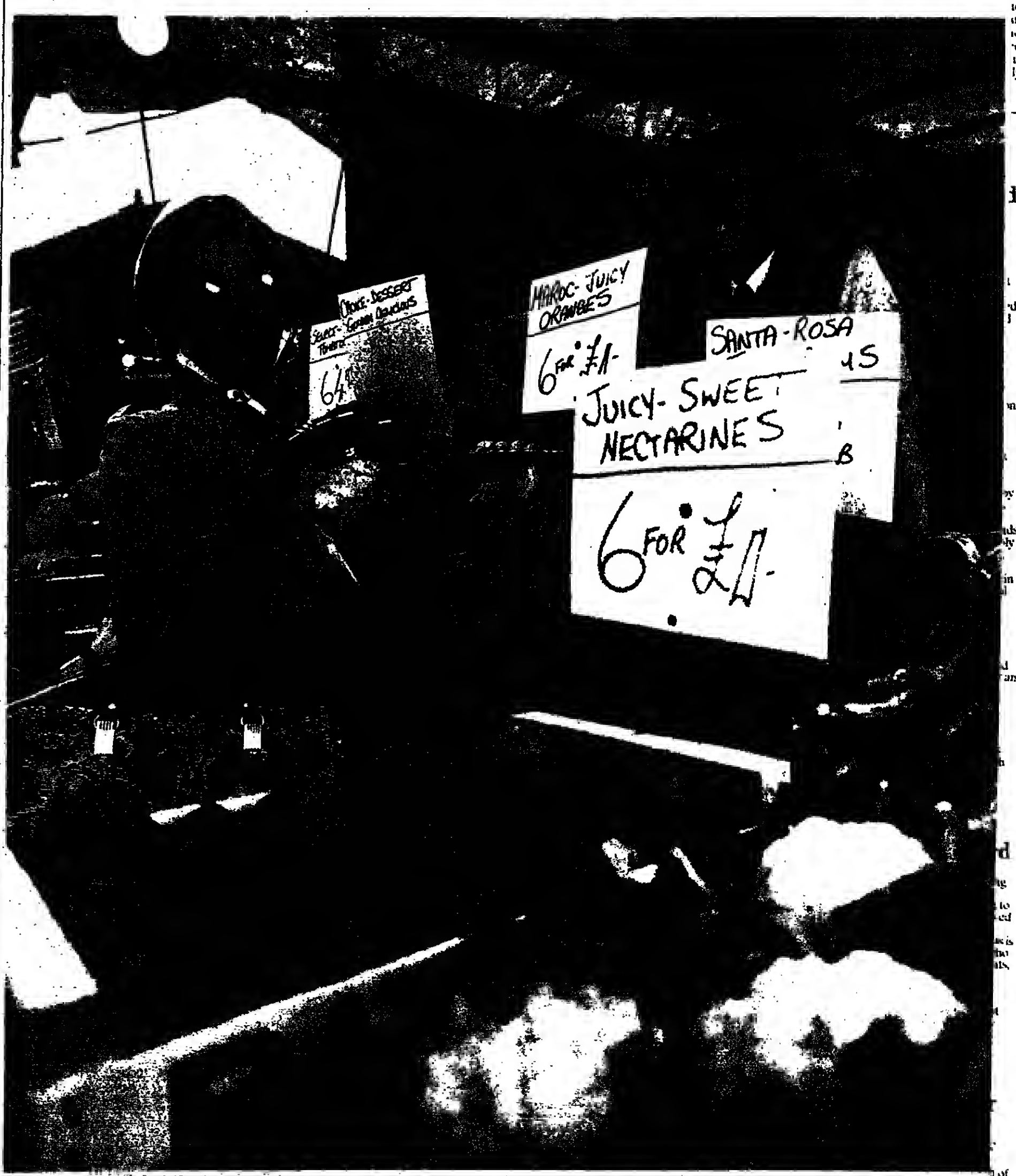
If there is life on Mars, as British scientists suggested last week, then it must be used to bad weather. New pictures, taken a month apart by the Hubble Space Telescope, show

storms churning the planet's red dust near the north polar cap. The picture on the left, taken in mid-September, shows a salmon-coloured notch in the white north polar cap: a storm 600 miles long. The bright dust can also be seen over the dark surface surrounding

the cap, where it is caught up in the Martian jet stream and blown east. The picture on the right, taken in mid-October, shows that the storm has dissipated, though a comma-shaped cloud of dust can be seen curving across the ice cap. The shape is similar to cold fronts on Earth,

associated with low-pressure systems. But nothing quite like this has been seen on Mars before. Scientists have thought that life is more likely to be found near the polar regions, which though cooler, have abundant water.

The polar storm is probably caused by large temperature differences between the polar ice and the dark regions to the south, heated by the springtime sun. The sun also makes the frozen carbon dioxide in the polar cap evaporate. In the second picture, the cap's edge has receded by about 120 miles.



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Spitting image: Masked voters cheer Bob Dole on his California tour Photograph: Reuters

Early voting in person (no need to provide a reason, as in some other states) was available for 17 days at 16 locations in the county, including one drive-through for the physically challenged, where a sign read "Just Honk and We'll Be Out To Serve You."

This time, however, it will not happen. The polls giving Mr. Clinton a double digit lead point to crushing Democratic majorities of the electoral and popular Presidential votes.

The first clue will be nationally. Republican Indiana, where polls close at 6pm (11pm GMT), a Clinton win there, or a hairy breadth Dole victory, means big trouble for the Republicans. In Kentucky, which also closes at 6pm, the fate of the first-term Republican, Ed Whitfield, in the state's District No1 may signal whether Newt Gingrich remains Speaker.

At 7 pm (midnight GMT), the first results will come from East coast states, including Florida and Virginia. If Clinton wins the first, he's sure of election; if he carries Virginia, it's a blow-out. At 7.30pm, polls close in Ohio, without which no Republican has won this century, and where Clinton leads.

Half an hour later, 17 states finish voting, including Texas, Massachusetts and most of the Midwest. If Clinton carries Texas, he could reach 270 votes and then. But if his edge in Democratic Massachusetts drops below, say, 15 per cent, then the national race could be close.

There is a legitimate worry that the likelihood of deficit-financed legislation would be increased.

Lower long-term interest rates due to progress on the deficit have helped take the Dow Jones index past the 5,000 and the 6,000 barriers during the past 12 months. Share prices have doubled since Mr Clinton took office, and have climbed 140 per cent in six years.

However, calmer voices on Wall Street think the fears of a post-election crash are exaggerated and any decline in share prices would only be short-lived. Abby Cohen, at investment bank Goldman Sachs, said yesterday: "The Clinton Administration has a record following a tight fiscal policy, and what's more they are proud of it."

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe told Western countries which criticised a privatisation deal his government signed with a Malaysian company "to go to hell". The power producer YTL will invest £300m in the privatisation of Hwange Thermal Power Station. *Harris - Reader*

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End of road in sight for Clinton

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Today, finally, it ends, as perhaps 100 million Americans take part in the only opinion poll that really matters, casting their presidential votes after what has been among the longest, certainly the costliest, and some would say the most corrupted election campaign in recent US history.

The winner, virtually beyond doubt, will be Bill Clinton over

'One unpredictable factor is turnout after a dreary and static campaign that has produced few ideas and less passion'

his Republican challenger Bob Dole. But what may be best remembered of an eminently forgettable contest is the \$1.6bn (£1bn) that was spent on it, the row over seamy Democratic fundraising practices with which it ended, and the sheer length of the process.

Hardly had Mr Clinton dethroned George Bush on 3 November 1992 than manoeuvring among prospective Republican contenders for this year began. With a bunched primary schedule, it was said, an early start was essential. Thus it was that on 20 January 1995 nine of them addressed a New Hampshire party dinner, the quasi-official start

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

of hostilities for the state's key primary, held a full 13 months later.

Mr Dole would lose there to Pat Buchanan, and would be defeated in Delaware and Arizona by the publishing magnate Steve Forbes. But the uncertainty vanished in South Carolina on 2 March, after which the Senate majority leader won every single primary. By 19 March he had mathematically locked up the nomination. But President Clinton has proved an infinitely tougher target.

Nothing Mr Dole has tried—resignation from the Senate, the choice of Jack Kemp as running mate, a sweetly choreographed convention, a 15 per cent tax cut, and finally broadsides against the Clinton character—has made any difference. In March Mr Clinton had a double digit lead. He still had one yesterday, 16 points according to a CBS/New York Times poll, 12 according to NBC/Wall Street Journal, 16 points according to CNN/USA Today. This margin translates at the least into resounding victory, possibly a landslide.

The 73-year-old Mr Dole may be breaking endurance records and wrecking his voice with his 96-hour "Sleepless somewhere in the USA" scamper around the country, which took him to six states yesterday



Bill Clinton in Union, New Jersey, at the start of a final five-state burst of campaigning. Photograph: Elaine Self/Reuters

few ideas and less passion. Despite the intricacies of the candidates and get-out-the-vote drives by everyone from the unions and women's organisations to the Christian right and the National Rifle Association, turnout may be well down on the 55 per cent of 1992, and conceivably could drop below 50 per cent for the first time since the Second World War.

Normally low turnout aids Republicans, but in 1996 perhaps not. Surveys have shown that the most motivated voting groups are the old, women and environmentalists, all Democratic constituencies scared stiff by the Republican Congress, and which might give Mr Clinton victories in usually Republican states like Florida and Arizona.

Barring an upset unprecedented in history, therefore, the real suspense lies in the battle for Congress—which in the case of the House may not even be decided today, after a court row forcing run-off elections in a dozen Texas districts in December. But the betting is that the Republicans will cling to control of both Senate and House, albeit by a whisker.

Meanwhile a record 90 state initiatives will be on today's ballots across the country. Californians will vote on ending affirmative action and legalising marijuana for medical purposes. Fourteen states will tackle term limits again, while in another seven states, voters will consider measures to legalise gambling.

alone before a last symbolic stop at 3am this morning in Independence, Missouri.

The town is home of Harry Truman, the patron saint of every doomed presidential contender since, thanks to his 1948

upset win over Thomas Dewey. But this pilgrimage will almost certainly have as little impact on the outcome as Mr Clinton's final five-state burst that will take him back to Little Rock at 4.00am, or the \$3m that the Re-

form Party's Ross Perot was spending on 30- and 60-minute election-eve "infomercials" on the major networks.

The one unpredictable factor is turnout, after a dreary and static campaign that has produced

How old Dole got pumped up, then burst

John Carlin
San Diego

Bob Dole completed his sprint finish to polling day crosby of voice and smiling bravely, as if to say it is not whether you win or lose but how you play the game.

By last night he had visited 18 states in four days, making 30 progressively shorter campaign stops along the way. Today he plans to travel to Independence, Missouri, to pose next to a statue of Harry Truman, the Democratic president who scored a huge electoral upset in 1948. Then he goes home to Russell, Kansas, to vote with his family, including a sister who, disobeying the orders of the Dole campaign team, confessed to the press last week that she knew her big brother was a beaten man.

And, for all the bravado, you sense that he knows it too. His campaign-closing dash around the United States has been a high speed procession through the stations of the cross on the way to what the stars and polls proclaim will be an inevitable electoral Calvary.

At a stop in San Diego a crowd of maybe 400 sunny Californians in sunglasses and shorts went through the enthusiastic motions but their loyalty to the old campaigner was not matched by a belief that he could win. One man tried to raise the cry "Kick Bubba's Butt! Kick Bubba's Butt!" but after two attempts met with only half-hearted responses he shrugged and contented himself with shaking a miniature Stars and Stripes.



Bravado: Bob Dole and his wife Elizabeth on the final lap of visiting 18 states in four days

Mr Dole himself looked fresh and crisp in a dark suit and tie, having just emerged from his first rest of any significance, six hours in two and a half days. The smile was bright but the voice betrayed weariness. Employing his trademark rhetorical device, gratuitous repetition, he began with "we're going to work around the clock" three times. But since the whole country has heard him say those seven words time and again on television, and since he lacks the orator's flair for imbuing the

banal with drama, the crowd responded not with cheers but with perfunctory applause.

Neither did they catch fire when he declared, in glaring contravention of the available evidence, that the polls in California were showing he was in a dead-heat with Mr Clinton.

But, in the last days of his campaign, Mr Dole has hit upon a message that resonates with the Republican faithful. It is "character", of which Mr Dole says he has much and President

Clinton has little. Where Mr Clinton has remained weakest in the campaign was on the question of public trust, mountains of allegations having rained down upon the White House concerning illicit deals of one shape or another.

So barely a mention of Mr Dole's fabled 15 per cent tax cut in San Diego or elsewhere on his "96-hour Non-Stop Victory Tour" but lots of suggestions that if Mr Clinton is re-elected "shades of Whitewater" will haunt him during

his second term. Revealingly, however, when Mr Dole made that point it sounded more like a prediction than a warning.

Conversations with members of the crowd at San Diego revealed that the grass roots of the party were under no illusions either. A lady who, in a reference to Mr Dole's dog, wore a "Leader for First Pet" badge on her chest said the Republican candidate was a wonderful man but "pity he is not a showman like Bill Clinton".

David Jacks, who described himself as a "moderate Republican", said "Bill and Hillary Clinton are the Bonnie and Clyde of American politics". But in the next breath he admitted that Mr Clinton would shoot Mr Dole down in today's election. Wearing a "Dole/Kemp" badge, he said: "I admire Dole but he is too old, too wishy-washy and a bad speaker."

And there Mr Jacks spoke, probably, for much of America. They will not vote for him but they admire his war record, his old-fashioned decency and his pluck, a spectacular quantity of which he has displayed at the death of the campaign for a man of 73.

How did he do it? How was he managing manifestly to outlast the bedag-gled reporters on his plane, most of whom were about half his age? Sheila Burke, a trained nurse who was his chief of staff when he was in the Senate, had the answer. Lots of water, lots of juice and small snacks of fruit, cheese and crackers. "They pump you up," she explained, "and then you crash."

Quite.

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Romania finally turns out old guard

Adrian Bridge
Central Europe Correspondent

Almost seven years after toppling communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Romanians have turned against the former communists who have ruled them since - thereby earning the distinction of being the last country in eastern Europe to do so.

With half the votes counted from Sunday's parliamentary election, the country was yesterday clearly heading for a centre-right government, in what will be the first real transfer of power in Romania since Ceausescu fell in 1989.

In the parallel presidential

vote, the former communist incumbent, Ion Iliescu, emerged narrowly ahead, but faced a tough battle in a second round run-off vote against his main rival, Emil Constantinescu, later this month.

As the scale of the former communists' defeat in the parliamentary poll became clear, there was jubilation at the headquarters of Mr Constantinescu's Democratic Convention (CDR), the party now set to lead a governing coalition.

"After seven years of pseudo-democracy and neo-communist rule, the people realised that a total change was needed," declared Lucian Hossu, a leading member of the CDR.

"This is a natural reaction because all the promises turned out to be lies and people's lives became worse and worse."

According to the partial results, the CDR was poised to get some 30 per cent of the vote, well ahead of the 22 per cent registered by Mr Iliescu's Party of Social Democracy (PDSR).

As such, it looked to be well placed to form a government with the third placed centre-right Social Democratic Union headed by the pro-reform former Prime Minister Petre Roman.



Ion Iliescu: faces tough battle in second round



People power: Emil Constantinescu, whose Democratic Convention is set to lead a governing coalition in Romania, in the mood to celebrate

Photograph: AFP

Most Romanians saw the election result as a damning indictment of the PDSR, the political heir to Ceausescu's Communist Party, which has ruled the country under a number of different guises ever since 1989.

The PDSR was widely blamed for the widespread poverty and corruption that still bedevil Romania and for failing to introduce the kind of sweeping free market reforms that have resulted in dramatic economic improvements in some of Romania's former Warsaw Pact allies such as Poland,

Hungary and the Czech Republic.

"When people looked to some of our neighbours they saw a better standard of life," said Silviu Brucan, a political analyst and former dissident. "Naturally they compared it with the misery and poverty here and concluded something was wrong."

Whereas Romania opted to stick with former communists after 1989, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, like most countries in the region, elected centre-right governments which carried out far-reaching economic reforms.

Although painful at first, these policies have yielded positive results, with all three countries now expected to be in the first wave of new recruits to the European Union and Nato.

During the election campaign, Mr Constantinescu promised to try and bring Romania up to the level of its more prosperous neighbours by enacting a range of social, economic and political reforms aimed at speeding up privatisation, ending corruption and tackling mass poverty. He also promised tax cuts, while at the

same time pledging more support for the needy.

According to the partial results in the presidential poll, Mr Constantinescu looked set to win 28 per cent of the vote, with Mr Iliescu capturing 33 per cent. Neither was seen to have built up a convincing enough level of support to be confident of victory in the second round run-off on 17 November.

Should Mr Iliescu win a fresh term as President, he will almost certainly be forced to "cohabit" with a centre-right government - another first in Romanian politics.

Germans set sights on EU military alliance

Inna Karacs
Bonn

Germany has set its sights on re-vamping the defence structure of Europe, creating a European Union-wide military alliance. The vision, likely to be opposed by Britain and the EU's neutral member-states, was outlined yesterday by the Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel.

Speaking to the daily *Handelsblatt*, he called for an amendment to the Maastricht Treaty to allow the EU's national defence arm, the Western European Union, to be integrated within the organisation. The transition to a fully-fledged "European pillar" within Nato is envisaged in three stages and would be completed in seven to 10 years.

Britain says such a change would undermine Nato, which has served the continent well. Though Bonn also professes to be a keen Nato ally, Mr Kinkel describes strengthening Europe's own security system as "indispensable".

Germany is also proposing at the current round of the Intergovernmental Conference the appointment of a Europe-wide foreign and security supremo, a general secretary who, in Mr Kinkel's words, "will sit in Brussels like a spider in a web".

This person, answerable to the EU's Council of Ministers, would be endowed with wide powers, though not as sweeping as France would like.

Asked if Germany supported French calls for the appointment of a more powerful "EU foreign minister", Mr Kinkel replied: "Europe is not yet ready for that." German caution about this yet-to-be created office stems largely from France's choice for the vacancy: Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former French president.

With the EU set to expand in the coming years, Mr Kinkel argues for more centralisation, a strengthening of the hands of the Commission president and the powers of the European parliament.



Klaus Kinkel: Setting the cat among the pigeons

Such a development would reduce the influence of national parliaments and national sovereignty. The president could be elected by the European parliament, he suggests, and should be allowed more influence in choosing other commissioners, who would be fewer.

For efficiency, Mr Kinkel intends dispensing with the assent of every member state. "We are... at the limit of our possibilities," he said.

"With 20 or more members, the Union will no longer be able to set if it is saddled with the current decision-making process."

Under German proposals, member-states' right of veto would be retained only on security and on certain budgetary matters, whilst other areas would be governed by the qualified-majority principle.

The system Mr Kinkel proposes favours the big states, preventing the minnows from ganging up on the countries Germany thinks have earned their right to lead Europe. Britain, France and Germany combined could see off the rest of the continent. Efficiency also dictates that some states forgo their right for a place in the EU's decision-making organ.

Wind of change blows through the east

Last week's election results in Bulgaria and Romania suggest the winds of democratic change are blowing with renewed vigour in the former Communist states of central and eastern Europe.

Recent elections in Albania and Bosnia drew heavy criticism from foreign observers for failing to meet acceptable international standards, but the Bulgarian and Romanian polls indicate that peaceful political change achieved by the voters will be becoming the norm in most parts of the region.

Bulgaria's presidential election produced a convincing victory for the opposition candidate, Petar Stoyanov, over his Socialist (ex-Communist) rival, Ivan Marazov. Although the Socialists have a majority in parliament, where real power

Tony Barber sees a resurgence of democracy throughout the region

resides in Bulgaria, voters sent a clear signal that they did not want the ex-Communists to dominate national politics.

Romania's parliamentary election was the first since the December 1989 revolution to result in a defeat for the remodelled Communists who assumed power after the execution of the Ceausescus. If, as expected, the centrist opposition Democratic Convention forms the core of the next government, it will mark a rare example in 20th-century Romanian history of power being freely and fairly transferred from a ruling party to its rivals.

In those terms, Lithuania's post-Communist progress is

more advanced than that of most countries in the region. Power swung after 1992 elections.

Peaceful political change achieved by the voters' will is becoming the norm in region

tions from the anti-Communist opposition to the reformed Communists, known as the De-

mocratic Labour Party (DLP), but last month two conservative parties inflicted electoral defeat on the DLP.

In 1993 and 1994, ex-Communists returned to power after elections in Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria, and Poles last year elected Aleksander Kwasniewski, an ex-Communist, as president. Yet the Polish and Hungarian ex-Communists are keen economic reformers, committed to democracy, and determined to join Nato and the European Union.

The left-of-centre tide appeared to be flowing strongly last June, when Czech voters tilted to the opposition Social Democrats and deprived Václav Klaus's centre-right coalition government of its majority. At the time, some commentators regarded the result as the voters' revenge against Mr Klaus's strict free-market doctrines.

Yet the Czech Prime Minister's policies were often more gradualist than his Thatcherite rhetoric implied. This may explain why it took Czechs until this year to register complaints at the market reforms of the post-Communist age, whereas in Poland, where truly radical changes were thrust on the nation in January 1990, the reaction occurred as early as 1993.

In another election last weekend, Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, and his leftist coalition appeared to coast to victory despite the best efforts of a newly united opposition. Mr Milosevic was helped by coverage on state television that praised him as a Balkan peace-maker and played down the opposition's campaign messages.

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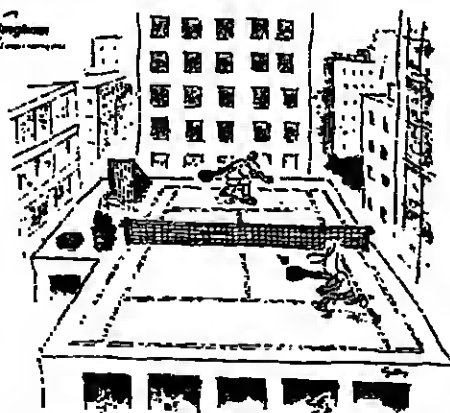
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'I am here until they carry me out,' said the American hotelier fighting the Moscow mafia. This week, they did

Paul Tatum foresaw his death. Last year, just before his luxurious hotel in Moscow was to play host to President Clinton, he produced a publicity booklet detailing a fierce dispute with his business partners. Across the front, in red Cyrillic letters, he printed: "Certificate of Death".

Phil Reeves on the murder of an entrepreneur who came to do business in the new Russia

nessmen, and the Moscow headquarters of the FBI. Until this week, Tatum was a few hundred yards from the riverside hotel, detectives were examining a blood-spattered area where Mr Tatum was shot in the back 11 times by a man with a Kalashnikov.

The establishment - the first American-led joint venture hotel to the Soviet Union - opened with great fanfare in July 1991, after H R Haldeman, Richard Nixon's chief-of-staff, helped him attract the support of the Radisson hotel chain.

The ensuing years were consumed by a murky and byzantine conflict over control of the £30m hotel and business centre.

back in, using an electric drill. When he was again evicted, he came back, this time to barricade himself inside his hotel room, with 25 armed guards. He carried on fighting, even after one of them was stabbed in a lavatory. Acknowledging that his life was at risk, he told *The Independent*: "I am here until they carry me out."

venture involving the Radisson, Mr Tate, and the city of Moscow. Radisson Hotels yesterday issued a statement calling Mr Tatum a "courageous entrepreneur", while noting that Radisson was in the process of dissolving its partnership with him through the US and Russian courts.

advertisement for an open letter to the mayor, Yuri Luzhkov, warning of the "dangerous activities" overshadowing international investment in Russia.



A fighter: Paul Tatum made his own 'death certificate'

Rifkind seeks security pact for Middle East

Christopher Ballamy
Defence Correspondent

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary yesterday proposed a security organisation which would include the entire Middle East region, going far beyond the current Arab-Israeli peace process to embrace Turkey, Iran and eventually Iraq.

wide-ranging in its functions." British sources said the boundaries of such a regional security forum had not yet been defined, but that Russia, as a state with strong political, military and technological links with the region would almost certainly be one of the "others".

OCME would be a useful forum for resolving strategic issues such as the supply of water - a potential cause of conflict between Turkey, which is a Nato country, Syria and Iraq. British officials also argue that, although the present Iraqi regime would be excluded from an OCME, it would offer a forum into which Iraq could, eventually, be integrated.

The organisation would be comparable to the OSCE, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Mr Rifkind suggested that the new organisation might be called OCME, the Organisation for Cooperation in the Middle East.

Mr Rifkind has been keen to launch the idea of an OCME for some time, and his proposals have been circulated in France and the US. Both Israelis and Arabs see him as influential in the Middle East but Mr Rifkind has been keen to widen the debate beyond the immediate Arab-Israeli focus of the middle east peace process.

Such an organisation would evolve rather than spring into existence," Mr Rifkind said. "An OCME would be open in principle to all in the region to participate. This would include a country like Turkey, intimately linked but not part of any regional bodies, of course without prejudice to its relations with the West ... I would expect in due course countries like Iraq and Iran to find their place in the OCME, once circumstances permit."

Speaking at the Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi, Mr Rifkind said: "What is lacking at present is an overall structure to encourage co-operation between all the countries of the region, with the help and participation of friends outside, like Britain, France, the US and others - a structure which is comprehensive in its membership and

The OSCE, which currently comprises 54 states including the US, Canada and Russia, emerged as a useful means of establishing contact between the two former military blocs in Europe - Nato and the Warsaw Pact. The absence of comparable organisations in Africa and the Middle East is seen as a disadvantage.

Britain believes that an



Fire power: A Taliban gunner recoils as he is engulfed by his gun's blast during fighting yesterday outside the Afghan capital, Kabul. The Islamic group was attacking the positions of General Masoud and General Dostum, who are holding high ground north of the capital. Photograph: Santiago Lyon/AP

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Decline and fall of the men who tyrannised Africa

Grisly ex-dictator dies aged 75

James Roberts

Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who in the 1970s did as much for Africa's image in the world as Hitler did for Germany's, has died of a heart attack aged 75. Yesterday thousands of mourners gathered outside the main hospital in the Central African Republic capital of Bangui to pay their last respects to a man who not only slaughtered his opponents but ate them too.

Raised by French missionaries after his father was murdered and his mother committed suicide, the cannibal emperor was something of a Francophile. He joined the French army at 18, was decorated for bravery, and chose Napoleon Bonaparte as a role model.

He seized power in 1966. In the 1970s Bokassa embarrassed the then French president, Giscard d'Estaing, by saying he had given him diamonds. Giscard said he sold the diamonds and gave the proceeds to charity but the affair tainted his image at home and possibly contributed to his defeat in the presidential election of 1981.

Bokassa lived in exile in France and Ivory Coast after his overthrow but returned in 1986 and was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted and he was released in September 1993.

Obituary, page 16



Mobutu leaves Swiss hide-out

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

The Zairean dictator, General Mobutu Sese Seko, pictured left, arrived in Nice yesterday after hours of speculation about whether he would leave Switzerland, where he has been recovering from an operation, and if he did, whether he would be allowed into France.

Although Mr Mobutu, who is 66, owns a villa on the Riviera near Monaco and a flat in Paris, he has, in effect, been *persona non grata* in France since 1994, though there have been clues this year that he has mended his relationship with President Chirac.

He was said to have looked tired when he left his hotel for Geneva airport. Hotel staff made a point of saying that he settled the bill before he left.

The Zairean leader, who is 66 and has been in power for 31 years, had been in Switzerland since August, where he was being treated for cancer of the prostate.

He had been operated on at the Lausanne University hospital but it is believed that he has stayed on in Switzerland because it was diplomatically convenient. If he returns to Zaire he faces severe difficulties in restoring order to the country.

French seeking summit on Zaire

Mary Dejevsky
Paris

In its first official response to the crisis in central Africa, France yesterday proposed an emergency international conference to discuss reinforcement of security "north and south of Kivu" in eastern Zaire.

The Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, said France wanted all its European and African "partners" to be represented, and the US and Canada. Any operation agreed would entail the dispatch of troops.

The proposal appeared to be a response to pressure from groups in France, including charities like Médecins sans Frontières, that Paris should not stand by as a region closely associated with French influence descended into chaos.

Mr de Charette made clear that in its urgency and the specific nature of the agenda, the meeting superseded, but did not replace, the conference on the region proposed last week by President Jacques Chirac.

But it also suggested an effort by France not to repeat past errors. Insistence that as many countries as possible should take part suggested concern that it should not seem to be acting unilaterally or trying to protect its own interests in a region where Francophone and Anglophone interests have long been in competition.

Since the crisis escalated last week, France has been cautious in its official statements. Partly, it may have been trying to lay to rest the mixed diplomatic reaction to Mr Chirac's recent outburst in Israel. Mostly, however, French reticence is explained by its experience two years ago and the shadow of Operation Turquoise.

This was a military and aid operation, launched under French auspices from Zaire, to support Hutu rebels in Rwanda – and pre-empt a return to power by the more Anglophone-inclined Tutsis.

Widely seen as having precipitated the mass killing of Tutsis and set off the refugee crisis which now threatens to explode, it earned France international opprobrium.

This time, France has been distinguished by reluctance to do or say anything until someone else has given a lead, and by its determination that any action should be organised and conducted with others.

Media comment has referred in breath-taking fashion to the events of two years ago as a foreign-policy error that did lasting damage.

And when the death of Jean-Bedel Bokassa, former ruler of the Central African Republic, was announced this morning, it was this discredited relic of French Africa policy, and not the emergency on the Rwanda-Zaire border, that led national news bulletins.

France's decision to involve the US and Canada also suggests a desire to bury the hatchet with Washington over Africa policy. Last month France and the US engaged in sniping dur-

ing an Africa tour by the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher. France took umbrage at criticism by him of countries that saw themselves as having "reserved zones" in the continent, and the US objected to the Secretary of State's tour, his first in four years, being seen by France as an election ploy.

The specific nature of the French proposal – to discuss "enforcing security to the north and south of Kivu on a temporary basis by appropriate means" – is also significant.

Partly, it marks a recognition that order has to be brought to the area, if necessary by force, before there is any chance of a humanitarian aid operation being effective.



Hervé de Charette: Wants US involvement at talks

The focus on this region of Zaire, where the border has been breached, also implies France is keen to prevent any redrawing of the frontier – a solution favoured by some in Rwanda – and so to defend not only Zaire's territorial integrity but also the dignity of its current (and absent) leader, President Mobutu Sese Seko. Until yesterday he was in Switzerland, where he was variously reported to be living it up at Lausanne nightspots or to be at death's door from prostate cancer that had spread.

Mr Mobutu, *persona non grata* in France since the massacres in Rwanda two years ago, made a "private" visit to Paris in April and met Mr Chirac. His arrival late yesterday on the Côte d'Azur, where he has a villa, came amid concern about the stability of Zaire but it also suggested that some deal had been done with France, although there was no hint of what it might be.

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Conjuring tricks and pre-election treats

It seems such a straightforward political choice: money for tax cuts or for an underfunded NHS. With hospital trusts likely to go £300m into the red this year, the clamour for more health spending has begun. But Ken Clarke is resisting, insisting that spending must be squeezed – presumably to pay for pre-election tax cuts instead.

To be true to historical form, Labour should now be leaping up and down demanding more spending on the health service. The choice in the election would then be clear: vote Labour for higher taxes, doctors, nurses and hospital beds; vote Conservative for money in your pocket.

But it isn't as simple as that. For a start, Labour is not playing ball. There is indeed an immediate choice to be made between £300m to make up the hospitals' shortfall, and £300m towards cutting inheritance tax (for example). But proper health care versus tax cuts is not the most important trade-off – either in the Budget, the general election, or the next five years. Nor is there a long-term crisis in health spending. Contrary to expectations, the health service has not been seriously squeezed during 17 years of Conservative government. Today we spend a higher proportion of our national income on health than we did in 1979.

And there is no good reason why health's share of the national cake should be rising any faster. We are a healthy nation. If, as we get richer, we want to spend more as individuals on our health then we should put the money into healthy food and exercise – a far more cost-effective way of improving health than shortening waiting lists.

This year a specific problem has emerged. The health budget hardly increased, compared to the increases in previous years. Yet demands on hospitals continue to rise, with the growing elderly population and an unexplained increase in accident and emergency attendance. No wonder then that the hospitals are in trouble. The Government would be wrong to use tax cuts as a reason to avoid bailing them out. But £300m isn't going to hurt the bank. It makes up less than one per cent of spending on the NHS, and is nothing in comparison with the billions needed for significant tax cuts.

If Kenneth Clarke is planning a substantial Budget giveaway – cutting the basic rate to 20p for example – then the hospital trust shortfall will be small change in comparison. If he can find that kind of cut in spending somewhere else (or that level of figure fiddling) then there seems little reason why he shouldn't fit in another pre-



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election health spending bribe as well.

The more serious risk is that the Government will be so determined to produce substantial tax cuts that it will deny resources to other areas that badly need it. Education, rather than health care, is the area that really requires more investment over the next decade, whether we pay for it publicly or privately. Improving the quality of schooling, giving children with difficulties the attention they need, delivering books and computers to the classroom, and recruiting and motivating top quality teachers

all costs money. The Liberal Democrats make a plausible case when they argue that taxes should actually go up to pay for better education. Whatever happens, taxes certainly should not be cut when the extra cash can go on education instead.

Nor should the Government pretend that tax cuts can be paid for without any painful spending cuts tomorrow. When you have a £300bn budget to play with, a few conjuring tricks here and there are quite sufficient to bamboozle everyone for a few months. Burying a funding shortfall somewhere in the public sector

pay bill is one popular tactic, so is slashing capital spending. But those games cannot be played for long.

It would be dishonest for the Government to promise huge tax cuts when the nation cannot really afford it. If Kenneth Clarke announces in his Budget next month that the basic rate is going to be cut to 20p, then the next government, whatever its political hue, will have to find a way of raising taxes again or cutting spending to make ends meet – just as it did after the 1992 election. There seem to be hints around in the political back-alley which suggest the Tories may be about to pull the same deception they pulled on voters in 1992: portraying themselves as the party of tax cuts in contrast to Labour tax rises, when in fact they know that the cuts must be paid for by someone, somehow, somewhere.

Labour – in its determination to make sure the Conservatives can't repeat the trick – risks its own dishonesty. Eager not to be portrayed as the high-spend, high-tax party, it risks endorsing the idea that tax cuts are painless. Reducing tax for the poorly paid is an admirable aim, not least because it could encourage employment. But in the short term tax cuts at the bottom end will need to be paid for by tax increases at the top, or by identified cuts in public spending.

As our nation gets richer, and our economy grows, there is more money for governments to play with. But there are new demands, too. Taxing and spending decisions, especially in the short term, are trade-offs. Voters are often wiser than politicians think: they will not forget that they were treated, then tricked, last time around.

Travels with my prejudices

British tourists are ranging further afield, says the Association of British Travel Agents. "Exotic" destinations (like Mexico? exotic?) are in. It would be gratifying if this signalled a revival in the spirit of adventure and exploration. In fact it is about simple pricing: skiing in North America has become a lot cheaper than Switzerland; the Caribbean now competes with Cyprus.

Will greater distance broaden the nation's horizons? Not likely. It's hard to argue that package travel broadens the mind. After all, we haven't become conspicuously more European through taking holidays in France and Spain. People returned from the Med with their skin brownier, their hair paler, and their prejudices very firmly intact.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The best way to handle a wife-beater

Sir: The selection of Paul Gascoigne for the England team and the controversy it has aroused crystallises some of the most pressing questions facing our society ("England's women expect a wife-beater to stay in decent obscurity", 2 November).

Glen Hoddle's decision to give Gascoigne another chance – a chance to establish a good character in conjunction with his accepting counselling to help him overcome his problems – is a most refreshing and much needed injection of compassion and understanding into public life. And it is still one that refuses to condone the player's violent behaviour off the field.

Hoddle has made a point of saying that he hopes his inclusion of Gascoigne will help the man overcome his problems. As such, his attitude contrasts sharply with the many who can see no further than making outraged condemnations.

Some of Glen Hoddle's critics have warned of the danger of Gascoigne becoming a role model and thus reinforcing the behaviour of men who beat women. Perhaps, though, he might become a role model for those whose behaviour is unacceptable but who recognise that they have a problem and seek help.

Hoddle's emphasis on inclusion also makes a telling juxtaposition with the word "exclusion", which we have heard used so frequently in relation to unruly pupils. While their behaviour is absolutely unacceptable, simply excluding these children from school will not bring them the understanding and expert help they undoubtedly need. **TERESA BELTON**
Norwich

Sir: Who says athletes or any other public figures are, or should be, role models? Youths may want to play like Gascoigne, but how many really want to be like him in every respect?

Talk of role models encourages the adoration of celebrities, which is dangerous. As Jesse Jackson frequently points out to black ghetto children in America, where sports, especially, are seen as a way to escape poverty. Only a painful handicap would succeed.

A loving parent, a dedicated teacher or an interested neighbour are better role models than all the heroes and heroines who ever lived. **RONALD ODGERS**
Carlton, North Yorkshire

Sir: Soccer is something I don't understand, but will it be worth protesting should there be any future printing of books by H.G. Wells, not to mention the staging of plays by Dylan Thomas, as it is alleged they were horrid to their wives? Perhaps we should also stay away from any further productions of Shakespeare's Henry VIII. **ROBERT VINCENT**
Andover, Hampshire

Media studies maligned

Sir: The condemnation of media studies courses as a whole in Lucy Hodges' article ("The trendy treatise", 31 October) is reminiscent of the condemnation of the rise of English and Modern History by Oxbridge classicists of a hundred years ago – fashionable, a passing phase, a poor training of



the mind, etc. It is another manifestation of what amounts to a campaign in the media against the study of their own institutions and products and against the acquisition of skills that seemingly are unworthy of being taught and are in little demand.

This knee-jerk reaction to rapidly growing subject areas in higher education involves assumptions about trendiness and soft options without really asking questions about why subjects grow.

Such growth can have nothing, apparently, to do with the development of new and challenging ideas which seem highly relevant to modern post-industrial societies, and nothing to do with the expansion of media-related job opportunities in those societies. Universities are accused of "cashing in" on the trend, and there seems no recognition of the alternative view that they are responding to demand from applicants.

None of us in the field can be complacent about the failure of some graduates to get jobs, and media studies has no doubt its dotter fringe and some less than excellent courses, but Ms Hodges seems to think it would be better if unemployed media graduates had joined the very much larger numbers of unemployed graduates of engineering, sociology and business studies. **DAVID FADDY**
Head of School of Communication University of Westminster Harrow, Middlesex

Sir: How disappointing that *The Independent* should jump on the bandwagon of attacking "trendy" university degrees such as Media Studies, especially when American Schools of Journalism have been

pouring out eminent journalists for decades. Will we never learn?

You have failed to realise the changing nature of media courses over the last 10 years. Here at Huddersfield, as in many universities, our media teaching is predominantly practical, aimed at equipping students with multi-skills for the new bi-media era and with a high investment in technology. **STEPHEN KELLY**
Teaching Fellow in Media University of Huddersfield

Sir: Six unsupported generalisations in two sentences (leading article, 31 October). Not to worry, *Independent*: such sloppy writing would keep you safe from a place on our degree course. **Dr MAIRE M DAVIES**
Director of Studies, B.A. Media & Cultural Studies London College of Printing London EC1

Windfall unity

Sir: Your Business Comment (1 November) announces "Blair and Brown fall out over windfall gains". In fact Blair, Brown and the whole Labour Party are united in their commitment to a one-off windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised monopoly utilities which will pay, over the course of a Parliament, for our carefully costed new deal for young people and the long-term unemployed. **ALASTAIR CAMPBELL**
Press Secretary to Tony Blair London SW1

British fog over Ireland's past

Sir: Ronan Bennett's article on the film *Michael Collins* states that "audiences in the US are sadly unable to follow the British lead of dispassionate inquiry and analysis when it comes to Ireland".

After years of debate with Irish, British and other European nationalists, it is my view that in general the British are anything but capable of dispassionate inquiry and analysis when it comes to Ireland. Unfortunately, the traditional teaching of history in the UK has left us with a poor sense of our general involvement in the affairs of other countries as a colonial power. Were the British generally more capable of dispassionate inquiry and analysis, one could only hope that the situation in Northern Ireland could have been resolved sooner. **MICHAEL D SMITH**
London SE13

The day I hit a schoolboy

Sir: Have we lost our sense of proportion on smacking children ("Carey happy to give a gentle smack", 26 October, letter 28 October)? I taught chemistry in a Cambridge boys' school during the war, and I had to teach 30 boys in a lab designed for 20.

During one practical class a boy deliberately put a piece of sodium on to a wire spoon and held it

under the water tap. There was, of course, an explosion. I walked up to the culprit and slapped him on the cheek. I had no further trouble with that difficult class. I am still convinced that I did the right thing. **BARBARA DAINTON**
(Lady Dainton) Oxford

Sir: So David Shaw thinks that respect for teachers is earned merely by the wearing of a smart "uniform" (report, 4 November). Gillian Shephard wants to reintroduce beating and John Major wants schools to indoctrinate children to an authoritarian "moral" agenda. Why don't we solve the problems of education by sending all our children to a Chinese prison? **TOM HARDY**
Tolworth Girls' School Surbiton, Surrey

Divinely wrong

Sir: It is hardly surprising that John Major's election in 1992 was considered unimportant by the American news media (letter, 1 November). Many, probably most, Americans believe the Queen governs Britain.

Only last year a columnist in the *Washington Post* told that paper's readers that government in Britain is based on "the divine right of kings" and offered a quotation from James I in 1607 in proof. **GEOFFREY PERRET**
Beverly, Humberside

Give us health figures straight

Sir: Jack O'Sullivan ("Is the NHS safe under Mr Blair's team?", 30 October) is right to suggest that Labour is as short as ever on fresh ideas. But journalists and other commentators repeatedly let the politicians off two hooks.

Firstly, they conspire in using a monetary language which the politicians are only too happy to use to confuse the public: continual reference to the percentage of GDP spent on the NHS.

It is clearer and more relevant to ask whether total health care expenditure per person per year in the UK (1993 figures from OECD health data) at £728 is about right, too much or too little compared with Germany (£1,447), France (£1,335), Canada (£1,218), Portugal (£395) and Greece (£252).

However, that is not the only hook. Your journalists and correspondents (Stephen Pollard, letter 2 November) too readily let the politicians off with phrases such as "... to increase funding of the NHS ..." will simply not be possible beyond what John Major has already pledged since it will require tax increases. That neatly constrains and curtails the argument.

Let us open the debate in relation to how the tax cake is divided up. Should there be a bigger slice to the NHS and less to defence? That is the debate we should be having – and it would be less confusing if your commentators used language understood by all of us. **Dr G DE LACEY**
Consultant Radiologist, Northwick Park Hospital Harrow, Middlesex

Sanctions needed against Nigeria

Sir: The anniversary of the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni minority rights activists at Nigeria's notorious Port Harcourt prison falls on 10 November. The murders authorised by an illegal military regime caused outrage worldwide. The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria's membership and threatened further sanctions if improvements were not made on human rights. Other countries withdrew diplomatic representation. At long last the world at large was seeing General Abacha and his henchmen for what they are.

Twelve months on and nothing has changed for the largest black nation on earth. Over a hundred million people are still enslaved by a brutal and corrupt cabal and its greed for the nation's vast oil wealth. The prisons hold thousands of political prisoners, most notably president elect Moshood Abacha, whose only crime was to win the 1993 presidential elections, kept in solitary confinement without trial for almost two and a half years.

The Foreign and Commonwealth office believes that "progress is being made". They should listen to prominent Nigerians like Wole Soyinka and Chief Raf Uwechue, who call for an oil embargo, banning of further arms sales and, importantly as Nigeria's military masters have sated away many millions in oil revenues, the freezing of assets held in Swiss and Lebanese bank accounts. It is only measures such as these that will bring an end to this evil regime. **TOM ROBBINS**
Norton Canes, Staffordshire

Good old Richard

Sir: Why should the statue of Richard I, a valiant Crusader King who personified the hopes of medieval Christianity by fighting to reclaim the Holy Land, be removed from Westminster (letter, 4 November)? What is incorrect is the statue of Oliver Cromwell, who forcibly dissolved four parliaments, on one occasion commanding a soldier to remove "that fool's bauble" the Speaker's mace. He established a dictatorial personal rule through a high standing army and a network of spies. **JENNIFER MILLER**
London SW15

Rats to Hanover

Sir: Shame on my native town, Hamburg, for abandoning its Hanseatic spirit and the Beatles' muses ("Four decades on the Beatles", 2 November). But last year's arts news editor, David Lister, was accused of libel by Hanover, it was the pompous corporation plus mayor of Hameln (Hamelin) who had to suffer the Pied Piper's just wrath – and not only according to Robert Browning. **INGEROSE SAYER-HEYD**
Osnabrück

Lock-free zone

Sir: Further to your correspondence on the crimeless 1950s, the Golden Age extended well into the 1960s. As a student at Exeter University in 1968, I remember the opening of a new women's hall of residence which had no locks on any of its 80 bedrooms. **STEPHEN MAGILL**
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire

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(Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk)
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analysis

As Boris Yeltsin prepares for his heart operation, a small, unelected group wield power: his daughter Tatyana, a ruthless in-fighter rumoured to be her lover, and a clutch of heavyweight businessmen.

By Phil Reeves



Russia's new regency

Russians don't much like women taking part in politics. They occasionally profess admiration for Margaret Thatcher or their own Catherine the Great, but most regard the idea of female rule as about as welcome as a ban on fur hats. Yet that, in part, is what they now have.

As Boris Yeltsin awaits his heart operation, due this week, power has flowed from his enfeebled grasp into the youthful hands of his younger daughter, Tatyana Dyachenko, working with his chief of staff, Anatoly Chubais, and a powerful coterie of businessmen. Less than four months after an election that many in the West hoped would prove that democracy had finally taken root in Russia, unelected members of Moscow's social elite have taken command.

The reaction has been negative. "They [the press] used to attack the president," grumbled Yeltsin's wife, Naina, in a weekend television interview. "Now it is Tatyana who is under fire." The family had stopped showing her husband the more distress-

ing newspaper articles, she said, for fear they would upset him.

But this does not appear to have daunted the Kremlin's new political double act. In the past four months, Chubais and his camp have secured the dismissal of their most formidable Kremlin opponents. They have appointed two leading business supporters to senior government jobs, consolidated control over two national television channels, and dictated access to the ailing president. Their enemies call them a regency; even their friends admit they rule the roost.

Even before Chubais and Dyachenko emerged on the scene, backed by a small group of influential pro-reform Moscow bankers and media tycoons, there was a strong sense of public betrayal surrounding Yeltsin's second term. Dozens of election promises have been shelved in the months since the president hobbled and - in some cases - flagrantly bought his way back into the Kremlin.

Agging and out of touch but for a handful of radio addresses and fleeting glimpses on television, he has become a remote shell of a president, closeted in

a sanatorium after a recurrence of heart trouble in June that his aides initially hushed up, for fear it would wreck his chances in the election's final round. Meanwhile, millions face the onset of winter without pay, benefits, meaningful jobs or even enough food.

But the discovery that the country is under the sway of a highly unpopular Kremlin courtier, the president's daughter, and a clutch of heavyweights from big business has further deepened the public's cynicism. Russia is a male-orientated society, where the age of female liberation has yet to dawn. "No one would ever elect Tatyana," said one leading analyst, "it is just not in the nature of the country. And can you name any woman in high office?" (There is, in fact, one: an obscure health minister.)

At present, Tatyana's role appears principally to be that of a link - a conduit of information and views between the president, his chief of staff Chubais, and the businessmen behind him. But her larger ambitions are the source of considerable speculation. Does

she aspire for power, high elected office, perhaps even eventually the presidency itself? Or is she simply helping to secure her father's position at a time when he is highly vulnerable to the scheming and plotting of those around him?

Some commentators have begun to hint that she is playing a longer game, and offer tentative comparisons with Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto, or even Indira Gandhi. According to *Moskovskaya Pravda*, one of Moscow's top political consultancies has been working on her profile, purely experimentally, to see how palatable she would be as a candidate. "Who would have thought half a year ago that this lady now marching through the Kremlin corridors with a radio telephone in her hand would become a real political figure?" remarked the paper.

Most Russians know remarkably little about 36-year-old Tatyana Dyachenko. Details of her personal life, which include a broken marriage to a Soviet-era engineer turned businessman, are scattered and incomplete. She has a 15-year-old son, also called Boris, whom Yeltsin dotes on.

This year Boris junior was enrolled in the £15,000-a-year English public school Millfield, in Somerset, where - intriguingly - Chubais at the same time decided to send his son, Alexei. Tatyana has a second boy, a baby.

Far years, she remained behind the scenes, a reserved, stylish-looking woman who was better educated, and better spoken, than her father. She trained as a mathematician and once held a job calculating

rocket trajectories. The fullest picture of her came from Yeltsin's autobiographical writings, including a bizarre account of how Yeltsin let her suckle his nipple when she was a baby. The president makes clear that the women in his family - his wife, Naina, and daughters, Yelena

media powerbrokers, including Boris Berezovsky, who runs a trading and media empire, and Vladimir Gusinsky, head of the Most-Group, coalesced around Chubais. Together, they took control of the task of selling Yeltsin to a sceptical nation. To run the show, they needed a direct line to the president.

the president, she was the only one considered capable of conveying it. And there were occasional flashes of an iron will. "When she said no to something, because the president didn't want it, that was it. It meant no. She had a very powerful veto," said Vyacheslav Nikonov, who worked on the campaign.

Yeltsin's gatekeeper

No one in Russian politics produces such extreme reactions as Anatoly Chubais, the gatekeeper and right-hand man to Boris Yeltsin. The circle of millionaire bankers and businessmen that support him see him as a brilliant economic and political talent, whose presence in the Kremlin will ensure the future of Russia's free-market reforms and the safety of their fortunes. But for many millions of other Russians, he is a charmless lackey of the West who devised a privatisation process in which Russia sold off some of its most treasured assets. Both sides would, however, agree on one point: the 41-year-old presidential chief of staff has the essential quality to survive in the Kremlin shark pool: ruthlessness. In the past four months, he has routed his most important rivals for power. Even before his appointment in July, he secured the dismissal of his main rival for the ear of the president, Yeltsin's former bodyguard, General Alexander Korzhakov. He was also behind the sacking of General Alexander Lebed.

Ten months ago, Chubais's career seemed to be in sharp decline after Yeltsin sacked him as his privatisation minister as a sop to an anti-reform, anti-Western mood in the country. He has worked his way back to the top with astonishing speed, masterminding Yeltsin's slick election campaign, and winning the post of chief of staff. Since then he has carefully shored up his own power base, sidelining the prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin. Through his association with Tatyana Dyachenko, Yeltsin's daughter, Chubais is now the only official with daily access to the president. He controls the Kremlin media operation, decides who sees the president, drafts laws and wields strong influence over at least two national TV channels.

They got it, by recruiting his family favourite, Tatyana.

As a member of the campaign's 10-strong analytical team, she acquired a reputation as a quietly efficient operator, with a shrewd sense of politics and presentation. She was acutely conscious of her father's image, rushing in to groom his sweep of silver hair before television appearances, and banning his guards from wearing sunglasses because it made them even more tuggish than usual. When there was bad news for

"The only person whom he [Yeltsin] listened to was his younger daughter, Tatyana," complained Nikolai Yegorov, the president's then chief of staff, in a recent interview. "Perhaps she has brains, but she is only a daughter and not an experienced politician. She has absolutely no experience in this area and for this reason can be easily manipulated."

Yegorov is one of a clutch of ousted Kremlin insiders who have publicly condemned the growing influence of the Tat-

yana-Chubais axis. He is also one of a group of political bruisers whom Chubais (helped by Tatyana) have winked out of the Kremlin in the past four months, most of whom level the same allegation: General Alexander Lebed, the sacked security chief, has talked of their desire to "rule as a duet", and has alleged that Chubais used Tatyana Dyachenko to persuade Yeltsin to fire him.

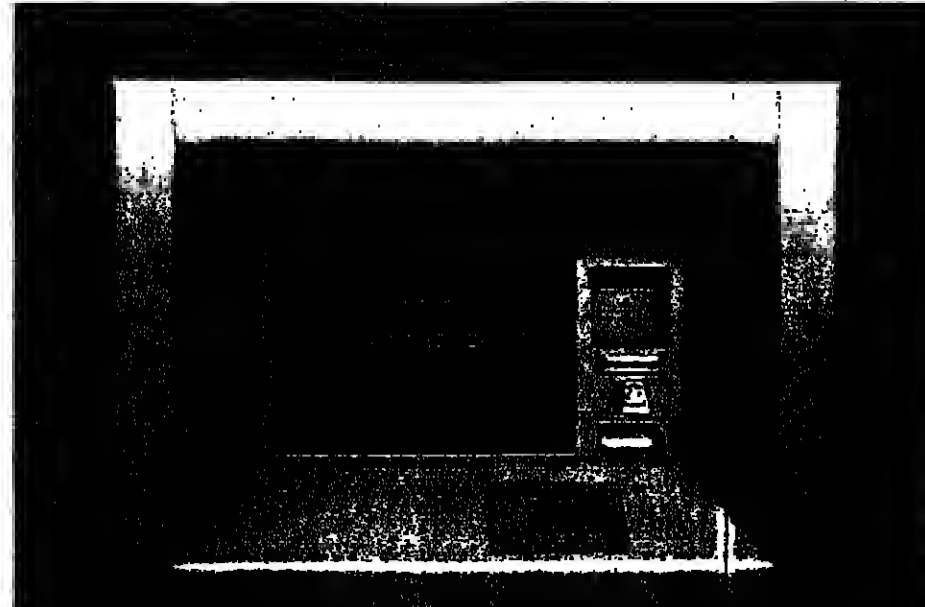
General Alexander Korzhakov, former head of the presidential guard, has accused Chubais of running an "unconstitutional regency", drafting presidential decrees in his own office. Tatyana brings Yeltsin the paperwork. Documents are "all prepared in Chubais's headquarters". The dismissal and alienation of the ex-KGB officer - for years Yeltsin's inseparable friend, trusted adviser, and drinking companion - is one of the most dramatic examples of Dyachenko's influence over her father. It is doubtful that Chubais could have persuaded Yeltsin to sever such a deep bond on his own.

Behind the cut and thrust of politics lies another, more delicate question. Is it true, as wagging tongues in Moscow claim, that the relationship between Chubais, 41, and Tatyana Dyachenko is more than merely professional? Reports of a liaison have been circulating for weeks in Moscow, a city which relishes scandal almost as much as Washington DC. Evidence, however, is in short supply.

In fact, sources say that the president's daughter's closest political associate is Igor Malashenko, president of Russia's commercially run NTV, another member of the campaign team. After the election, Malashenko was offered Chubais's job by Yeltsin, but turned it down. His company has been well rewarded for supporting the Kremlin during and after the elections; it has been allowed more space on the airwaves, is launching a new satellite service, and may even be allowed to buy up the ORT television channel.

But her future political plans overshadow lesser issues. At the moment, she and the Chubais camp hold the cards. They control a huge slice of the national television market - ORT and NTV - and a stack of newspapers. Attention has fixed on them, and not Russia's prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the man to whom power passes, according to the constitution, if Yeltsin is incapacitated. But he has presidential ambitions and plenty of allies in the oil and gas lobby. A rivalry is in the making.

Tatyana Dyachenko must know that the odds in this macho-minded country of a woman - not to mention another Yeltsin - being elected are about as long as they are for a snow-free winter. But she will also remember how Yeltsin has fought back from exile from the Politburo, the scandalous bombardment of the White House, the ludicrous Chechen war, and deep overall unpopularity. Crazy though it seems, she may yet be interested in something more than her father's place in history.



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How do we stop these flaming terrorists?



Miles Kingston

Frenzied last-minute talks are being mounted today in order to avert a devastating programme of terrorism planned for this evening all across the British mainland, involving rocket attacks, Chinese mortar assaults and potatoes being dropped in large fires and getting burnt to a cinder.

"It is the same every year," said a harassed Home Office official. "It is the official anniversary of one of the holiest days in the

history of the movement, and they insist on celebrating it. As a result we get a well-orchestrated mass outbreak of explosions and bombs all over Britain. It makes the Apprentice Boys' March look like Blind Man's Buff."

But what is it all for? What is this movement that celebrates such holy days? "I wish we knew," says the harassed Home Office official. "They never come out and make any demands. They never insist on any reparation. They seem to have no organised head of operations. These demonstrations of violence seem totally uncorrelated, yet they happen with frightening punctuality and regularity. As you probably know, an organisation with no chain of command is a lot harder to penetrate than any other kind. These people make the IRA look like the Boy Scouts."

Where are they based? "I only wish we knew," says what I can only describe as a harassed-looking Home Office official. "They can

cause violence and burning anywhere in the British Isles at will. Our fire brigades are stretched to the limit on 5 November. When the IRA pull off a job, it immobilises that part of town and it monopolises the emergency services in one area. But this Guy Fawkes mob can immobilise the whole bloody country!"

Guy Fawkes? Ah, so you have a name, at least? A lead of some kind?

"That's where they're so bloody clever!" says the Home Office official, swearing for the second time in as many sentences, which is a sure sign of being harassed. "Yes, we thought we had a lead when this name came up but we couldn't find him anywhere on the computer until somebody had the bright idea of looking in the Crimex Unsolved (Historical) file. Then we found him. Catholic terrorist, executed 1605, attempted murder and arson. What use was that to us?"

Were there no leads at all?

"Well, we found a woman

called Antonia Fraser who was a leading member of the modern Catholic establishment and who had written a life of this Fawkes man, so we hauled her in for questioning, but she was no help. She wouldn't say anything except 'Buy the book! We explained that we had bought the book but couldn't follow all of it and could she please in very simple words say what she thought had happened.'

"She said she thought that Guy Fawkes was innocent and had been framed by the secret services, which is what they always say, so we were just going to slap her around a little when her husband arrived, steaming hot, screaming about civil liberties and torture and man's basic inhumanity to man, as if 5 November itself wasn't an outrage, and on a far worse scale! We couldn't get a word in edgeways when they were both at it, so we chucked them out still screaming, him saying he was going to turn it all into a powerful one-act drama about oppression and she

saying she would back him all the way, and even attend the first night if she had to."

So where does that leave the peace process?

"Peace process?" says a very harassed Home Office official. "There is no peace process. There is just a series of last-minute, behind-the-scenes, under-the-table, behind-closed-doors, in-the-nick-of-time desperate talks."

Between whom?

"We don't even know that. That's how secret they are."

Then how do you know they are actually going on?

"We don't," confesses a harassed Home Office official. "I am just saying that to make it seem that something is happening. The truth is that we have no idea what is happening. We shall probably just leave them to get on with it as usual. There will be death and destruction on a grand scale and there is nothing we can do about it."

And that is why you look so harassed?

"No. That is because I work for Michael Howard."

صوتنا من الداخل

Elmer Gantry vs the Brixton boy: the gloves are off

Personal tensions between party leaders are nothing new. Neil Kinnock's dislike of Margaret Thatcher was largely political. But it impeded rather than enhanced his ability to get the better of her. Over Westland he famously failed to land the killer punch.

Kinnock once explained privately that his proper and traditionalist South Wales background inhibited him from attacking a woman, and an older woman at that. But his dislike was probably the reason why, in the confidence debate after she fell in November 1990, he failed sufficiently to exploit the Tories' discomfort by taunting them with the charge that they had sacrificed a leader better than they deserved. Kinnock almost certainly thought at the time – as Blair, interestingly, did not – that they had been right to get rid of her.

Moreover, those who were close to John Smith insist that the especially close personal relationship which he was supposed to enjoy with John Major was a bit of a Tory myth. Smith did see Major privately on several occasions, for example on the unfolding Bosnia crisis, but, it is said, emerged more often bemused than enlightened. Certainly Smith was inclined to make sure that there was an aide listening on an extension when the two leaders spoke on the telephone – as, he assumed, Major was doing, too.

So, what of the Blair-Major relationship? Well, there has certainly been scratchiness over the one issue the two parties were supposed to join forces over: Dunblane. Major has told colleagues he was angry that the Government had agreed to postpone publication of the Callen report until after the two party conference. Labour made such an issue of Dunblane, George Robertson, however, is adamant that the agreement applied only to publication of the report – as his letter to Michael Forsyth indicates. There were already resolutions down for the conference, which anyway made it impossible to avoid debating the issue.

But this wasn't all. It now turns out that there was a little retrospective friction – if not between the leaders themselves, then between their two camps – over a short interview Major gave to the BBC outside his hotel the night before he and Blair visited the stricken school in Dunblane. Officials travelling with Major were worried that, since Blair was staying in Dunblane, he might be all over the airwaves before the Prime Minister arrived. It was agreed that neither would go public until the following day. But Major's aides say he was "doorstepped" by the famously dogged Kenny McIntyre, the BBC's Scottish political editor, and did feel he could refuse to speak when a microphone was thrust at him. Labour were falling over themselves yesterday to say that they now accept there was no bad faith, and that Major was not in any way responsible for, or Blair remotely troubled by, other details such as the relative size of the Government-provided wreaths given to each, or Blair's place in the motorcade.



Donald Macintyre

Blair is still waiting for an apology after Major suggested on TV that the Labour leader took a free trip on Concorde

So is all really sweetness and light? Major irritated Labour by complaining to a TV executive that Blair broke faith over Dunblane. And Blair was annoyed last month by Major's suggestion on BBC TV's *Breakfast with Frost* that he had once been, as a backbencher, on a free Concorde trip to the US, courtesy of Ian Greer. As it happens, the all-party trip had been sanctioned by Margaret Thatcher. Blair's office thought that Major had disassociated himself from similar accusations being pressed by the backbencher David Shaw. They made it clear after the interview that Blair was expecting an apology. And there hasn't been one yet.

This sheds a welcome, if at times bewildering, light on the mechanics of relations between the men at the top. But what does it prove? The clue to this, perhaps, is in the vigorous attempts yesterday to play down the idea of any serious personal difficulties in their relations. While Tony Blair was protesting that there were no problems in his relationship with Major, a senior Tory – for background, of course – was explaining vigorously that Major actually likes Blair. The truth is more complicated. Blair respects Major's ability to win elections, his survivability, his resilience and personal toughness. But he believes, and will never stop saying when the occasion arises, that Major is a weak leader. Major's "Elmer Gantry" crack – to a Tory MP – is wide of the mark, since the fire and brimstone film evangelist was a lecher and a drunk. But Major does get irritated by what he sometimes sees as Blair's "holier than thou" approach to the moral agenda. Major knows that Blair is a formidable political force. But he may be a little chipper that Blair went to a private school – the same one, ironically, that spawned his own hero, Iain Macleod. And maybe some of this will help him recover an edge in the election.

But he must also surely know that he can't let it all get out of hand. The voters do care about personalities as well as issues. But there is a clear distinction between Blair attacking Major for weak leadership – or, for that matter, Major attacking Blair for being authoritarian – and petty aspersions on the character of your opponent.

Tonight, unless the US sees the biggest upset since Truman beat Dewey, a man routinely accused of serial adultery and taking dodgy foreign party donations will wipe the floor with a war hero with a generation of Senate experience behind him. It's a sobering thought. In the incestuous village that is Westminster, Major and Blair might as well get on as best they can.

A folk festival to lighten our darkness

by Andrew Brown

Drive down any motorway on an early November night: a river of jewels pours towards you. Above the headlights, rockets soar and bang in the air like spray. If brilliance and colour were the only test of religious art, the M25 in fireworks week would be the largest cathedral in the world. The British have invented an entirely new folk festival: a week of satisfying bangs and flashes which have lost all their historic purposes – except to defy the oncoming winter. They are neither purely Guy Fawkes' night, nor Hallowe'en, nor the pagan festivals which must have preceded both. Instead there is something we might as well call fireworks week: a spontaneous outburst of religious enthusiasm, without any dogma at all.

This new festival is very popular. According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, which is not enthusiastic about the figures, the number of fireworks sold in this country has risen by 22 per cent in the last five years, to 137 million; and this figure excludes both the weakest and the most powerful categories.

Once upon a time the justification for all these explosions was obvious. They were to remind the Catholics of how miserable they deserved to be, and the Protestants of how grateful they should be. In the Anglican Book of Common Prayer there was a special service to remember "Gonpowder Treason", used on November 5 every year.

"We yield thee our unfeigned thanks and praise for the wonderful and mighty deliverance of our gracious sovereign King James the first, the Queen, the Prince, and all the Royal Branches, with the Nobility, Clergy, and Commons of England, then assembled in Parliament, by Popish treachery appointed as sheep to the slaughter, in a most barbarous and savage manner beyond the examples of former ages." Later in the service, God was thanked for bringing us King William III, "for the deliverance of our Church and nation from Popish tyranny and arbitrary power".

Queen Victoria removed all that in 1859; and nowadays the sentiments hardly make sense at all, outside of Northern Ireland and Lewes in Sussex, where they still celebrate Guy Fawkes' night with much of the old ritual. But neither does Hallowe'en. In this country the only people who really believe that Hallowe'en has anything to do



Between Hallowe'en and Guy Fawkes' night we have fireworks week: a spontaneous outburst of religious enthusiasm without any dogma

with raising spirits are some evangelical Christians, and even they are diminishing their protests as it becomes more about fireworks and less about pumpkins. Hallowe'en has come to mean the start of the firework season, and Guy Fawkes' night, the end of it. In between lies a passage of celebration and danger which is curiously detached from its moorings.

The danger is important. It seems heartless to say so after a weekend when fireworks have left eight children fatherless, but without the danger, fireworks would be less satisfyingly dramatic. If the bangs and flashes were not enough to frighten humans, how could they hope to drive away the darkness? Besides, the firework week of our modern autumn descends from much more barbarous and dangerous practices.

The association of this autumn festival with pain and suffering is much deeper than night at first appears. There is a tradition of young men leaping through bonfires at seasonal festivals. This can never have been entirely safe; yet according to Fraser's *Golden Bough* it was a weakened form of the original rite, which would have involved human sacrifice. We do know that the Druids burned human beings, along with other animals, alive in wicker cages. Since then, Chris-

tians, too, have been valued for their combustible qualities, first by the Romans, and in the 16th century, by other Christians as well. It is horrible to reflect that the burning of heretics was a form of popular entertainment as well as a religious purging.

Modern celebrations are much purer. Dr Martyn Percy, the chaplain of Christ's College, Cambridge, who has made a special study of charismatic religion, says that fireworks are a powerful religious symbol. "We may be seeing the emergence of a genuine folk-religious festival, in which we frighten off the darkness. In Chinese religion you light fireworks to scare the evil spirits from the sky. That is why the bangs have to be so noisy." And fireworks can be used as an illustration of all sorts of Christian ideas, he says. "They can illustrate the idea of the Ascension perfectly. They go up into heaven: light spreads over the world; and the original substance disappears."

The link between physical light and spiritual enlightenment seems inescapable. Aldous Huxley, in *The Doors of Perception*, argued that the use of stained glass in cathedrals arose from the need to fill the darkness with coloured lights, because these would tend to transport the soul into a deeper reality. He was, admittedly, writing in praise of the religious use of mescaline. But he drew on a wealth of erudition to argue that there were visions of heaven as a city of many jewels among mystics in all the literate religions of the world; and if his argument explains the use of stained glass in cathedrals, it could also explain the uplifting effect of fireworks on the spirit.

Dr Percy says the firework festival can be seen as part of a wider trend towards celebration in all religions. In charismatic Christianity, he says, it is now common to be invited to "celebrations" that have no liturgical anchor. They are not celebrations of any particular saint or day, but simply of the goodness of being alive. From the standpoint of traditional religion this can look strange and worrying, but in fact we should celebrate this trend towards pure celebration. Of course it is frightening. In the darkness beneath the bright explosions there is anarchy about. The adults are drunk. The children are scared. The bad spirits to be frightened are still real. But at least they are no longer political: we have ascended from *auto-da-fé* to a pure *feu de joie*.

Education? It's the economy, stupid

Labour's solution to the underclass is misguided, says Robin Marris. Money management is the key

Last week the Chancellor raised interest rates. Only by a token amount, but enough to pass a "message" to the City. Commentators have given diverse explanations for his action. None has given concrete evidence that actual inflation is accelerating dangerously. Gordon Brown, in his contribution to the debate on the Queen's Speech, implied that he did believe there was now a serious danger of inflation, but that this was the fault of the Government for failing to encourage investment.

My explanation is that both the Chancellor and his Shadow are still under the spell of a restrictionist, macro-economic philosophy which effectively discourages investment. One can daily see the results throughout the media. Isn't it odd how City columnists so often report good news bad news? In July last, *The Times* reported, "Output rise may stall rate cut"; in the same month, *The Independent* wrote, "US jobs surge causes Wall Street pandemonium". Only a few weeks ago, again in *The Independent*, we read, "Clarke boom is bad for the stock market".

Think about it. Something that is good for the unemployed and for the economy causes stock market prices to fall and the Bank Governor to clamour for higher interest rates. Either there is something odd about the system, or market operators have an upside-down view of reality. I think it is the latter. Market operators, and the people who write for them, are suffering from irrational expectations. Journalists believe markets think that governments have come to believe that almost any improvement in the real economy is a danger sign for inflation. It is a vicious circle. Whether governments believe the gloomy scenario or not, they are forced, by fear of the markets, to behave as if they did.

There are many arguments about the cause of this situation. After five years of 3 per cent inflation, we had the late-Eighties outbreak, when, though general OECD inflation never rose above 5 per cent, UK inflation stood at 7 per cent for a short time. The painful part of that experience was the violent decline in employment and production when the "hust" came. That was not a normal reaction: it was because the financial system had become unstable due to deregulation and the loans bonanza. So we got all the horrors of unemployment and negative equity.

Some of the instability is still there, and there is reason to be cautious, though exaggerated caution carries heavy costs. If the productive business sector comes to believe that every time they produce more goods they will be clobbered, then

they will be cautious about long-term expansion plans. The economy's long-term capacity for producing goods and employing labour will grow only slowly. It will fail to keep up with the growth of the labour supply caused by productivity gains and increased participation of women in the workforce. The gap between labour supply and demand will grow. New technology and globalisation of trade will cause the effects to fall hardest on those who are least well qualified. There will be an increasing problem of an underclass.

This malign process has been going on in

gerated, but 30 per cent is not far out.) Yet Tony Blair and Gordon Brown said nothing of the relationship between economic growth and job creation. In their comments on the macro-economy, both spoke mainly about inflation.

Instead, they said the solution to the underclass problem is "education, education and more education". But over the period in which the problem has emerged, we have seen a massive increase in the educational level of the working population. To take a single indicator, the proportion of women with no qualifications has



Are they too afraid of offending the City? Gordon Brown (left) and Kenneth Clarke

fallen from two-thirds to a third. The corresponding change among men is even stronger.

So what, in the minds of Blair and Brown, has gone wrong? They do not really tell us. They hint that the British education system is still too elitist, but are unspecific about details or remedies. More fundamentally, they do not face up to this question: if those who have not participated in the education revolution had had better qualifications, would there in fact have been jobs for them? On my calculations, the answer is "no".

Implied conventional wisdom says otherwise, but gives no argument or calculation. I have a nasty suspicion that part of the reason for the Brown/Blair position lies in two fears. Both are understandable, but no less disturbing for that. The first stems from the realisation that it is

indeed difficult for governments to increase the sustainable rate of long-term economic growth. The second is fear of "the markets".

If these and similar fears are so real that nothing can be done, I am pessimistic for the underclass. Without macro-economic success, "supply-side" policies, such as more and better education, however intrinsically desirable, will fail to resolve the problem of jobs and low wages.

If that conclusion were true, it would be a poor reflection on the state of the world economy. Fortunately for my own state of mind, I do not myself believe it, because the long-run growth rate of total demand and capacity that the economy is able to sustain without unacceptable inflation (the so-called "sustainable" growth rate) is flexible. It is susceptible to both supply- and demand-side policy influences.

One policy that is required is a sustained effort by all governments to create a permanent reduction in long-term real interest rates (they are still, by historical standards, much too high). Another is simply a matter of business psychology. The business people who produce goods and services need constant reassurance that the basic aim of government policy is real long-term economic growth – not only of productivity per worker, but of total output and total employment.

The real economy needs to be constantly reassured that low inflation is a means to an end, not an end in itself. What Kenneth Clarke did last week gave all the wrong signals, and violated every one of these precepts.

Gordon Brown has shown more awareness of the problem, but his spoken contribution is still bedevilled by the City syndrome. He did not address the problem that high interest rates are themselves a hindrance to investment, and therefore also a barrier to growth. I agree this is a chicken-and-egg problem, but at least it must be recognised.

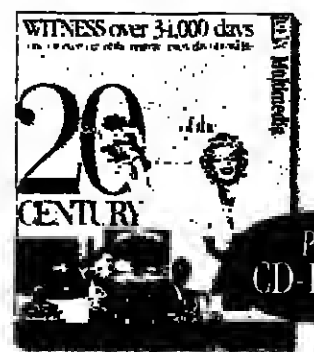
John Redwood MP interrupted the parliamentary discussion of these difficult matters to ask how the Labour Party could expect to be heard on economic questions when it could not handle a 10-year-old child in Nottinghamshire. Unless the national economic debate is raised to a higher level than that, we shall see more and more of the underclass, and, not improbably, yet more rioting children.

Robin Marris is Emeritus Professor of Economics at Birkbeck College, London University. His book *How to Save the Underclass* is published by Macmillan (£40 hardback, £12.99 paperback).

ON THIS DAY 1991



Robert Maxwell found dead 5th November 1991



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Oftel to look at £13bn BT takeover

Chris Godmark
Business Correspondent

British Telecom's proposed £13bn takeover of MCI, the US long-distance telephone operator, was facing mounting regulatory hurdles last night as AT&T, its giant American rival, said it would lodge a formal objection with the UK telecommunications watchdog, Oftel.

It also emerged that it will take up to a year to gain approval for the deal from competition authorities on both sides of the Atlantic.

One possible line of concern that could be investigated by Don Cruickshank, the UK regulator, is the 13.5 per cent stake in Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation which Concert, the new global company, will inherit from MCI. Mr Cruickshank has recently ordered BT to stop cross-promoting BSkyB satellite TV services in its advertising literature.

BT has already said it expects to take until autumn next year to get official approval A

tomers. Mentioning BT alongside the other leading European operators, he said: "If a country has a single, strong national telecommunications firm, it has a big problem."

"In the US we are very lucky that AT&T was broken up by court order in the early 1980s. Yet nowhere else around the globe do we see a repetition of our clearly successful experiment with demonopolisation."

Shares in BT soared yesterday as most City analysts gave the deal with MCI their seal of approval on the grounds that it boosted short-term value for shareholders.

BT shares ended the day 22p higher at 373p, having risen at one stage to 384p.

The highest rated UK team of telecoms analysts at BZW, the investment banking arm of Barclays Bank, changed their assessment of the stock to a "buy" recommendation while Hoare Govett, the stockbrokers, raised their fair value judgement of BT's share price from 350p to 400p.



Transatlantic team: The new Concert logo

spokeswoman for Oftel confirmed the UK side of the investigation had begun and said: "When we'll finish we can't say. We don't know until we study the agreement what sort of issues we need to address. There are other authorities who will be involved, including the DTI."

AT&T had previously announced its intention to lobby Oftel's US counterpart, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the Department of Justice on the grounds that BT still had a virtual monopoly of local telephone services.

US regulators have made clear they will only approve the deal if US firms can gain similar access to British phone markets as rival operators can achieve in the US. AT&T has 55 per cent of the US long-distance phone market, while since the group's break-up in the mid-1980s, it has had been excluded from the \$100bn local market.

However, during a visit to the UK in September, the chairman of the FCC expressed various concerns about the openness of all European telecoms markets. In a speech to the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, Reed Hundt warned that most European telephone markets remained closed to competition for residential cus-

BT said on Sunday it would raise its full-year dividend by 6.1 per cent to 19.85p, compared with a 5.6 per cent rise the previous year. Hoare Govett said this alone added 20p to the value of BT shares with the rest coming from the 35p-a-share special dividend, due to be paid next year.

Other analysts argued the special dividend, coupled with the prospect of share buybacks from 1997 onwards, would support BT shares through the turbulence of merging the two organisations.

"They've put an artificial floor under the share price with the dividend. In addition, BT shares will also represent 4 per cent of the London stock market, which means the big institutions will all be squeezed as demand for the shares increases for technical reasons," said John Karidis, from Kleinwort Benson.

However, analysts pointed out that the other main benefits of the deal were based on the potential for future growth which was much harder to calculate.

"I suspect MCI may find it just as hard to break into the local US phone market as the cable companies have found when battling against BT in the UK," said one.

Comment, page 19



Going through the roof: Analysts say that house price inflation in double digits is looking more likely as prices increase sharply

Zip in homes market 'signals rate rise'

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

Fresh signs of zip in the housing market point to the prospect of further rises in interest rates, economists said yesterday. The Bank of England's quarterly Inflation Report, out tomorrow, is expected to say that unless base rates increase again the Government is likely to miss its inflation target.

"It is very unlikely that just one touch on the tiller will be enough," said Paul Mariner-Lee, chief economist at investment bank Paribas.

He added that the Bank was likely to shade down its inflation forecast compared with its August report, but it was very

clear that the economy was building up steam.

Official figures due today are expected to signal a bounce in manufacturing output in September. Meanwhile the evidence of buoyant consumer demand continues to pile up.

House prices rose by 1.6 per cent in October, the biggest monthly increase since February 1994, according to Halifax Building Society. That took them 1.7 per cent higher than a year earlier, the fastest year-on-year increase since 1989.

The average house costs £65,609 against £61,251 in October 1995. Halifax has revised up its full-year forecast for house prices to 7 per cent and is predicting a similar advance

next year. Other housing market experts think this is still much too cautious. James Barty, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, said: "The housing market is very buoyant. House prices in London are in double digits across the country is looking more and more likely."

Last week, Nationwide Building Society reported a 7.9 per cent rise in prices over the past year, and a jump of 0.8 per cent last month compared with September.

Separate figures yesterday showed that new housebuilding starts rose by 16 per cent in the three months to September. The total of 47,100 starts was 13 per cent higher than in the same

three months a year earlier. Treasury minister Angela Knight said: "The building bricks of recovery, which have long since been there in other parts of the economy, are now in housebuilding too. Bricks are back in business."

Last month also saw an unexpectedly large rise of 0.7 per cent in M0, the narrow measure of the money supply. Its year-on-year growth increased to 7.5 per cent from 7.1 per cent in September.

The amount of cash in circulation in the economy, the main component of M0, climbed by £100m during the month. Although M0 is not a reliable month-to-month indicator of retail sales, yesterday's

figures did confirm the general picture of robust consumer spending.

The weekly sales figures from John Lewis, the department store group, added further anecdotal evidence. The amount of money passing through its tills in the week to 26 October was the highest so far this year, though the timing of half-term meant the year-on-year rate of growth dipped.

The Loodoo Chamber of Commerce said that the economy in London was "booming", with growth expected to top 4.6 per cent this year. It predicted unemployment in the capital would dip below 10 per cent by the end of the year for the first time since 1992.

Leslau cashes in £5m Burford share options

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

Nick Leslau, the 36 year old chief executive of the Burford and Trocadero property groups, cashed in share options worth more than £5m yesterday to pay off personal tax and debts. Following the deal he still retains Burford shares worth another £5m and a further 2.8 million options.

Considered one of the shrewdest property dealers, Leslau has built Burford rapidly with his partner Nick Wray, who made his fortune in the 1980s by buying a political newsletter and turning it into a widely-read City tip sheet.

Burford said yesterday that Mr Leslau had exercised his option to buy 4.8 million shares at

28.4p. They were placed in the market by BZW to raise £5.14m excluding the cost of the options. Burford's shares, which have risen from 63p a year ago, closed 0.5p lower at 136.5p yesterday.

The rise in Burford's shares follows a decade during which the company's net assets have risen more than eightfold, easily outpacing the rest of the property sector. As a result, the company has become one of the best regarded in the industry.

One of Mr Leslau's most astute moves was the £96m purchase of the Trocadero site in the middle of London's Piccadilly Circus. Previously a white elephant, the Troc had brought down three former owners but was transformed into a leisure goldmine and

spun off into a separately quoted stock market vehicle.

Leslau persuaded Japanese games giant Sega to develop a virtual reality theme park inside the centre called Segaworld to capitalise on the vast numbers of young tourists who throng the West End each year but had previously walked past, or worse, through the Trocadero.

Other high profile acquisitions by Leslau and Wray, dubbed with reference to the chairman of British Land the "Ritbits of tomorrow", have included the rights to End Blyton's literary estate including children's favourite Noddy.

The company also bought the London Pavilion, the shopping centre next to the Trocadero and announced a deal with Marvel Mania.



Caption - locked to grid

Invesco values its funds at \$150bn

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Invesco said yesterday it was creating one of the largest fund management groups in the world, controlling \$150bn (£91bn) of funds, following agreement yesterday to take over the Texas-based AIM for \$1.6bn.

The deal values the 72 per cent of the mutual fund group held by AIM founder directors and management at £720m and creates a group in the same league as Mercury Asset Management, Britain's biggest independent fund manager.

Four top executives of AIM, including Ted Bauer, the 77 year old founder, are to be locked in with four year fixed term contracts which will then convert to one year rolling contracts. Mr Bauer's stake in AIM is worth about £110 and he will end up with 5 per cent of the merged company.

In total, seven of the AIM directors will together hold a 20 per cent stake in the merged company, to be named Amvesco, and they have agreed not to sell their stakes for five years.

The announcement revealed that Invesco was notified last month that it is being investigated by Imro, the fund management regulator, for possible breaches of rules which "should be the subject of disciplinary proceedings."

Invesco said it had notified the breaches to Imro and they related to technical requirements for bank accounts and to written compliance procedures. It added that there was no loss to clients and any penalties would not be material.

One British analyst described the AIM mutual fund business as America's nearest equivalent to Perpetual, which is a fast growing British unit trust business with a reputation for innovation.

Invesco is paying with \$1.1bn worth of new ordinary shares with the other \$500m to be raised in cash from loans and a proposed one for five rights issue, which is expected to raise more than £100m.

AIM shareholders will own about 45 per cent of the enlarged group, and all of them, including TA Associates, a US venture capital firm which will hold 12 per cent of Amvesco - will be restricted for at least a year in selling their stakes.

A majority of AIM shareholders have agreed to the proposal, which Invesco said would be broadly neutral for its earnings per share next year. Mr Bauer said that there was no plan to switch the company's main stock market quote from London to the US, although he confirmed that the deal raised the proportion of the business in the US from 90 per cent to 95 per cent.

Invesco has already switched its business heavily across the Atlantic under its chairman, Charles Brady, who is based in Atlanta.

But Mr Brady said that Invesco still had 50 per cent of its shareholding in London.

Leading cable operators join anti-Sky campaign

Matthew Horsman
Media Editor

Britain's cable companies will renew their attack on Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB today, claiming the company is acting anti-competitively in the supply of pay-TV programming in the UK market.

For the first time, two of the country's leading cable operators, Nynex CableComms and

Telewest Communications, are lending their voice to the anti-Sky campaign, despite having signed controversial long-term supply agreements with BSkyB that had previously led to deep rifts in the cable industry.

In a statement signed by all cable operators, the industry will reject BSkyB's most recent "rate card", which lays out the terms and the prices under which Sky's channels are offered

on a wholesale basis to the cable industry. The companies are even threatening legal action against BSkyB, and will call on the Office of Fair Trading to look again at the company's dominant position in the market for pay-TV programming.

The move coincides with submissions to the European Commission in Brussels criticising the ever-closer ties between BSkyB and BT, which are co-op-

erating on the introduction of digital services from next year.

On BSkyB's rate card, a senior cable source said last night: "We don't like the fact that we are forced to sell channels in a certain way, despite what customers might want. Viewers are required to pay for services that they neither want nor use."

"We decided as an industry that it was time everybody has taken a fresh new look, based on

customers' preferences," said Stephen Davidson, chief executive of Telewest Communications, and chairman of the Cable Communications Association.

The new rate card was produced following a formal inquiry by the OFT, which largely cleared BSkyB of charges that it was acting anti-competitively.

The OFT asked the cable industry to respond to the revised rate card, which was meant to

make it easier for cable operators to package cable channels in line with market demand. However, the cable companies will argue that the new terms are no less onerous than the previous rate card, and that it could undermine the principles of consumer choice.

The attack on Sky follows several days of intensely negative press comment about BSkyB's control of the pay-TV market.

Murdoch set to price share issue

Matthew Horsman

Rupert Murdoch was last night poised to proceed with his controversial £1bn-plus preference share issue, convertible into shares of BSkyB, his 40-per-cent owned UK satellite broadcaster. Dealers were expecting the issue to be priced late last night, following the close of the market in New York.

Meanwhile, it emerged last night that Granada, the media company with an 11 per cent stake in BSkyB, was also considering ways of converting its shares into cash, as part of its attempts to reduce debt following its £3.9bn takeover of Forte this year.

A Granada insider said: "We are looking at ways to mortgage the BSkyB stake, but no decision has yet been taken."

Mr Murdoch's convertible issue, which was originally pitched last week, had to be delayed when it became clear that it coincided with a "close period" just in advance of BSkyB's quarterly results, released last Friday.

Mr Murdoch's News America Holdings, which is issuing the

convertible shares, will retain the right to pay converting shareholders in cash after five years if he decides to avoid diluting his stake.

At last night's price of 547p, down 23p on the day, the preference share issue would be convertible into about 10 per cent of BSkyB, or a quarter of Mr Murdoch's total stake. The proceeds are aimed at bolstering News Corporation's development of digital television, particularly in the US.

The issue, news of which has helped send BSkyB shares sharply lower in recent days, was seen by media analysts as proof that Mr Murdoch did not expect the stock to increase further in the medium term, following its rapid rise since the beginning of the year. His decision to raise money on the strength of the stake reminded the City of his issue of shares convertible into Pearson, the media conglomerate, in the early 1990s.

The preference shares, which are to carry a coupon of about 5 per cent, can be converted after five years. They will be marketing in the US, with Merrill Lynch as sole agent.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's high	Change%	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD%			
FTSE 100	3948.50	4073.10	-7.9	4073.10	3632.30	3.97			
FTSE 250	4429.20	4568.60	-2.3	4568.60	4015.30	3.52			
FTSE 350	1971.40	2022.10	-2.9	2022.10	1816.60	3.87			
FTSE SmallCap	2167.41	2244.36	-11.5	2244.36	1954.06	3.14			
FTSE All-Share	1946.55	1994.54	-27.3	1994.54	1791.55	3.82			
New York	6021.93	6094.23	+14.9	6094.23	5032.94	2.15			
Tokyo	20633.06	20696.80	-106.9	20696.80	19734.70	0.781			
Hong Kong	12529.27	12529.27	+149.1	12529.27	10204.87	3.311			
Frankfurt	2683.25	2734.82	+9.0	2734.82	2253.36	1.751			

Statistics as of 4 November

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
Treasury yield curve 4-5 year gilt (%)									
	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	4 Year	5 Year	10 Year
UK	6.09	6.09	7.70	7.80	7.81	8.02			
US	5.38	5.58	6.35	5.92	6.56	6.26			
Japan	0.47	0.50	2.52						
Germany	3.06	3.21	6.02	6.44	6.85				

Money Market Rates

CURRENCIES									
\$/£									
Index	Close	Week's high	Change	1996 High	1996 Low	YTD%			
\$ (London)	1.5378	1.5378	-1.5806	1.5378	1.28	0.6327			
\$ (NY)	1.5380	1.5380	-1.5799	1.5380	1.24	0.6330			
DM (London)	2.4833	2.4833	-1.9764	2.4833	1.5165	-0.6501			
¥ (London)	166.009	166.009	-14.124	166.009	113.590	-70.205			
£ Index	90.9	91.7	84.3	91.7	84.3	84.3			

Other Indicators

هكذا من الأصل



COMMENT

A highly unstable and potentially unwieldy management structure is being created. No company ultimately needs or can live with two chairmen and two chief executives'

British Telecom is marrying on the rebound

It is easy to be sceptical about British Telecom's merger with MCI. Easy, but wrong. To begin with, however, let's look at why this might be a bad thing for BT and its shareholders.

For a start, it looks too much like a deal on the rebound to be taken seriously as the claimed marriage made in heaven. If MCI was the perfect partner all along, what were the talks with Cable & Wireless all about? Just a casual fling? It is hard to resist the impression that BT just wants to do a deal - any deal. This, in other words, is expansion for the sake of it, management aggrandisement and all the other reasons why companies with big balance sheets and money to burn tend to go awry.

Second, the price being paid is plainly a full one, even if the promised special dividend and share buyback go some way to enabling BT shareholders to participate in their company's show of largesse. The claimed eventual cost savings of £500m a year hardly justify the premium being paid. Third, it is hard to see what benefits, other than cost savings, BT derives from 100 per cent ownership that it could not have got from its present 20 per cent holding in MCI. The existing level of investment might seem enough for all the international joint ventures and initiatives BT could possibly want.

Fourth, as with any international merger, a highly unstable and potentially unwieldy management structure is being created. No company ultimately needs or can live with

two chairmen and two chief executives, even when its two main businesses happen to be on either side of the Atlantic. The structure proposed by BT is a formula for possibly quite explosive friction.

Fifth, and possibly most important, BT is spending a small fortune expanding in what is fast becoming a commodity service in what is also the world's most competitive telecommunications market. Even the most basic of management textbooks tells you this is about the worst thing you could possibly do.

OK. These are all good reasons for BT to sit on its hands and do nothing. "Long-term strategies," as Lawrence Hayworth, telecoms analyst at Robert Fleming, remarked over the weekend, "do not make for good short-term shareholder value." BT should have been satisfied, the argument runs, with simply paying back vast amounts of its capital to shareholders in the form of special dividends and share buybacks, as so many of its deeply boring and unimaginative peers among the British utilities apparently are. Never mind the fact that the effect thus far has helped to transform them into some of the most hated institutions in the land, undermining the present Government's electoral chances in the process.

Fortunately, however, this is not the way of the world. The business of managing decline obviously has a place in most large organisations, but those that pursue it as a key objective ultimately fail. BT knows about little else outside telecommunications

and related value-added services. What is it supposed to do? Expand into high-margin women's lingerie? Alternatively it might have sat around and awaited the windfall profit tax, or, like British Gas, self-destructed in endless argument with its domestic regulator. Now that shareholders would really have thanked their board for. This is the strategy of despair and rightly BT is having none of it.

BT is proposing to invest its money in a relatively safe enterprise it knows quite a lot about which should, on a five to 10-year view, help put the company at the forefront of developments in one of the world's fastest-growing global businesses. What's so wrong with that?

BT may avoid paying Labour's windfall tax

The fortune BT is spending on MCI is a timely reminder of just what a tempting target it would make for Labour's windfall tax. When it comes to balance sheets, few are as robust as that of BT, as the £5.5bn in cash it is paying out under the MCI deal demonstrates. All this and a 10 per cent share buyback to come.

There is, therefore, no doubt that BT could afford to pay the windfall tax. Whether it actually will depends on how Mr Blair decides to levy it. Even though BT was plainly underpriced and overcapitalised on

privatisation, the company will escape the tax if it is calculated on the arbitrary, random and unfair basis of total shareholder return - currently the favoured option.

Labour might just as well calculate the new tax according to how pay scales inside utility boardrooms compare with the national average, for all the difference it would make. Or what about basing it on the combined height of all the executive directors? Better still, levy it in reverse alphabetic order, starting with Yorkshire Water and United Utilities.

There is no decent way of levying this unfortunate tax. All methods suffer from one flaw or another. But perhaps the least bad way might be to calculate it on the basis simply of market capitalisation, since this would at least penalise all privatised utilities in equal proportion to their ability to pay.

Somebody should have a pop at Greycoat

When you are rescued by the likes of Brian Myerson and Julian Tregear, UK Active Value Fund, as Greycoat was three years ago, you have to expect the subsequent ride to be uncomfortable. For turnaround funds like this, a year is a long time, let alone three; having watched its 10 per cent shareholding go nowhere in that time, the impatience of UK Active with Greycoat's management is understandable.

At 148.5p, Greycoat's shares stand at a discount of getting on for 30 per cent to the underlying value of the properties it owns minus the debt it took on to develop them. With a heavy exposure to the relatively buoyant central London property market, Greycoat really ought to be trading at a smaller discount.

Something is plainly awry. Bad management say Myerson and Tregear, and a radical solution is the only way out - sell all the properties and give the cash back to shareholders who are better equipped to invest it properly.

Bad shareholders, responds Greycoat - our shares have bombed, but what do you expect with the likes of UK Active scaring the horses? Hoisting a "for sale" sign at this stage in the cycle is madness, the company claims. And what becomes of all the tax losses we managed to build up by misreading the last boom and bust?

There's a grain of truth in both arguments. But turning up shareholders with a 50 per cent dividend, like yesterday, Greycoat tacitly agreed that it was overexposed to a couple of giant developments and would have partly to unwind its portfolio over time. By the same token, it is hardly helpful to have a potential seller of 10 per cent of the shares crashing around the share register undermining the incumbent management.

The best solution for all concerned would be if highlighting the value gap tempts someone else to have a pop at the company.

British Biotech shares slump on 'complicated data'

Magnus Grimond

British Biotech's shares slumped 9 per cent yesterday despite test results which the company claimed provided further confirmation of the effectiveness of its Marimastat anti-cancer treatment. The company, whose shares soared a year ago on hopes for Marimastat, said the phase two trials involving 381 cancer sufferers were the most wide-ranging yet and gave further evidence of the drug's ability to restrain the disease across a wide range of cancers. But it was rewarded with a 21.5p slump in the share price to 207.5p yesterday.

James Noble, finance director, said: "It is rather odd that the shares have gone down, because these are by far the most important results we have reported as a company." He ascribed the reaction to the fact that data was "just very, very complicated".

Many analysts, however, downplayed the significance of the results, which for the first

time included information on trials with patients with gastric and colorectal cancers. One analyst said: "Our broad thinking is that the information doesn't really add substantially to what we already know." Questions remained about the dosage regime and the side-effects of the drug, which causes pains in the arm and shoulder when used over a prolonged period.

The data was presented at the European Society for Medical Oncology meeting in Vienna, which brings together cancer specialists from all round Europe. British Biotech said the tests confirmed earlier results that showed higher dosage rates of 10mg, 25mg and 50mg twice a day were more effective than lower ones. The group claimed that the outcomes confirmed there was a connection between a reduction in antigens, used as a marker to monitor the progression of cancer, and a reduction in the disease.

"It is absolutely proved that we can reduce the antigens in a group of 381 patients and

where we reduce the antigens people live longer," Mr Noble said. "We obviously think it is the drug's effect, but we can't prove it as yet."

The results in 14 patients suffering from gastric cancers showed half appearing to respond or showing no further progression of the disease. Despite microscopic evidence that Marimastat was coating tumours in a fibre, as predicted, analysts said the sample size was too small to be significant. Other studies in colorectal, ovarian and pancreatic cancers had shown similar results, Mr Noble said.

Phase three trials under way on Marimastat remain the key to the drug's final approval and launch onto the market, which is unlikely before 1999 or 2000, analysts say. A treatment for pancreatic cancer is likely to be first to market, but external sales forecasts vary widely from \$100m in the first year to \$1bn. Later this month, the group will give phase three test data for its Lixaphant treatment



Re-inventing a Colossus: Graham Melmoth, new head of the UK's largest Co-Op group

New Co-Op boss prepares for 21st Century

Nigel Cope

The new chief executive of Britain's largest Co-Operative Society said yesterday that a merger of the group's disparate parts remains a possibility as he seeks to steer the 150-year-old Co-Op movement towards the 21st century.

Graham Melmoth, a 57-year-old Londoner, yesterday took control of the Manchester-based Co-Operative Wholesale Society, a huge but poorly understood organisation facing challenging times.

As the most senior executive within Britain's Co-Op, his brief is to modernise the movement, bring its various parts closer together and make it more competitive.

An attempted merger with its smaller counterpart, the Co-Operative Retail Society, failed last year when the two could not agree terms. Many see a merger as essential if the movement is to compete effectively against powerful competitors whose access to stock market capital gives them an advantage.

"I think a merger will happen," Mr Melmoth said. "The

Co-Op has been fragmented but I would like to ensure that the operations of the regions are controlled more centrally."

He wants more emphasis on central management, more investment in its people and more emphasis on strategic planning.

Re-inventing a colossus such as the CWS is a huge task. With annual sales of £3bn, the CWS is the main supplier of goods and services to the individual co-operative retail societies. But it also owns Co-Operative Bank and the Co-Operative Insurance Society. Its high street portfolio includes more than 700 Co-Op shops, 241 travel agents, 346 funeral parlours and a chain of opticians. With 50,000 acres it is the country's biggest farmer.

"My priority is to improve the society's performance. We've got a good spread of assets but I am hoping to get them to perform better," Mr Melmoth said.

His challenge is to fashion a future for a movement which sometimes appears weighed down by its history. Born out of the original Co-Op movement which was started by a group of Rochdale pioneers in 1844, the CWS started life in 1863.

IN BRIEF

• German industrial output fell unexpectedly in September. A fall of 1.8 per cent, the first drop since February, took production to a level 1.5 per cent lower than a year earlier. Both manufacturing and energy output declined during the month. However, the Economics Ministry indicated that the preliminary figure might be revised up substantially. Economists said GDP remained likely to rise by up to 1 per cent in the third quarter after the 1.5 per cent increase in the second quarter.

• The Royal Bank of Scotland subsidiary Citizens Financial Group has agreed to acquire Grove Bank, based in Boston, for \$87m (£53m). Grove, a savings bank, and Greater Boston Bank - which Grove is in the process of acquiring - have assets of \$766m and 10 branches between them. The deal will bring Citizens' branch network in New England to 240.

• Monument Derivatives has bought the research and bond broking business of the London Bond Broking Company from the Birmingham brokers Albert E Sharp. Monument, an equity derivatives broker on Life, said the acquisition of the new team, which includes the City economist Stephen Lewis, would allow it to expand its research and broking services.

• TI Group has said it will not increase its recommended £189m bid for Forvich, the Swedish polymer group. TI has been put under pressure from a group of rebel shareholders led by Henderson Investors, to raise its bid.

• Rank Group is to sell Shearings, its coach holidays business, to a management buy-out team backed by NatWest Ventures for an undisclosed sum. The business is expected to fetch £50m-£100m.

• British Airways chairman Sir Colin Marshall said implementation of its planned alliance with AMR Corp unit American Airlines could be delayed until after the expiry of its code sharing agreement with USAir Group in April 1997. Sir Colin said he was "hopeful" that BA would win US and EU anti-trust approval for its tie-up with AMR Corp unit American Airlines, "but whether we will implement the alliance by 1997 is still to be seen".

• Four bidders have been shortlisted for the proposed privatisation of the Government's loans to UK housing associations. One is a consortium of building societies including Abbey National, Halifax and Nationwide. The others are NatWest Markets and a consortium which includes the Housing Finance Corp, UBS, Barclays and Bank of Scotland. The Principality Mortgage Corporation has applied only for loans held by the Housing of Wales association. The combined loan portfolios have a book value of almost £1bn.

Greycoat fights back with payout pledge

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

The acrimonious battle between property developer Greycoat and one of its largest shareholders moved up a gear yesterday with the publication of first-half results and the promise of a 50 per cent dividend rise for the full year.

Greycoat used the issue of its interim figures to call on shareholders to reject a recent demand from Brian Myerson and Julian Tregear's UK Active Value Fund that the company sell all its properties and return the proceeds to shareholders.

Peter Thornton, chief executive of Greycoat, said breaking the company up made no sense for three reasons: it would sac-

rific the inherent growth potential of its central London development sites; it would hang a "closing down sale" sign over the company, reducing the prices it could raise through a disposal; and it would incur sizeable penalties for unwinding various financing facilities.

Greycoat's latest row with UK Active, which holds 10 per cent of the company's shares and which has been on the register since a rescue refinancing in 1993, was prompted two weeks ago when Mr Myerson and Mr Tregear called on the company to break itself up as a means of narrowing the widening gap between its share price and the underlying value of its assets.

The gap between the value

the market attributes to Greycoat's shares and the value of the properties it owns minus its debts is wider than for most of its peers. UK Active Value puts that down to poor management; the company blames concerns over the presence of a disgruntled shareholder on the register.

The move by UK Active Value has been widely seen as an attempt to highlight the value gap and flush out a possible bidder for the company rather than necessarily a genuine call for a break-up of the company. It is thought a number of property companies would be interested in buying Greycoat with perhaps 10 years of the current property cycle upturn remaining.

Announcing a 123 per cent

rise in interim pre-tax profits from £1.7m to £3.8m, Greycoat promised a full-year dividend of 1.2p, a 50 per cent increase on last year's 0.8p payout. That in turn represented a 33 per cent rise over the previous year's dividend. The company does not pay an interim dividend.

UK Active Value responded to Greycoat's figures with a further condemnation of the company's record: "This is yet again more hollow promises of value to come. Shareholders should ask how the promised value will be delivered."

"It is three years since Greycoat was rescued by UKAV and in that time the company has failed to convince the market that it has a clear strategy for growth."



Peter Thornton: Fighting move to break up Greycoat

Alliance & Leicester investors seek meeting

Investors angry at the terms of the Alliance & Leicester's £2.8bn conversion from a building society to a bank are demanding a special meeting with its directors ahead of the vote to approve conversion, which is due to be held in the London Arena on 11 December.

The Alliance & Leicester has decided to treat all its 2.4 million savers and borrowers the same when it comes to the pay-out of shares.

They will each get 250 shares worth at least £1,000 -

a move that has upset some customers who have large sums invested or who have been with the society for many years.

Patrick Mountain, 63, of Somerton, Somerset, a retired businessman and a former agent of the society, said he had received dozens of phone calls.

He is urging people who are angry to write protest letters warning they will withdraw all their savings, except for the amount needed to qualify for the shares.

"I would think there are probably several hundred thousand people who are feeling bitterly aggrieved," said Mr Mountain.

"They are being treated just the same as carpebaggers who opened accounts just before the decision to convert was announced."

In a statement, the Alliance & Leicester said it had opted for the share distribution scheme "only after careful consideration of all the possible options".

It said: "We believe our

chosen scheme is the fairest and most appropriate for the vast majority of our members and reflects the traditions of the society's mutual past."

A spokeswoman said the society was sorry that what it believed was a minority of members were disappointed.

More than 70 per cent of its investors have less than £2,000 in their accounts and the society believes they will be "very happy" with the choice of scheme.

Asked if possible action by customers posed any threat,

she added: "We don't believe so at the moment."

Meanwhile the two co-founders of the Halifax Action Group, Serge Lourie and Peter Judge, said they would again stand for election to the Halifax board and claimed the conversion process was "taking far too long". The Halifax, which has 9 million customers, is set to become a bank in June 1997.

Details of the flotation were announced two years ago and it is anticipated that borrowers and savers will receive an average of £1,000 each.

T&N gets asbestos reprieve

Magnus Grimond

T&N, the auto components maker, was yesterday given a temporary reprieve from a ruling which could have reopened hundreds of millions of dollars in lawsuits resulting from its past life as an asbestos company.

Even so, the shares slumped 4.5p to 129p as the group warned less buoyant markets and destocking were hitting margins in pistons, friction products and gaskets. It was "particularly difficult to assess the final outcome of the year's results", T&N said.

The stay on asbestosis lawsuits came as the US Supreme Court agreed to review a ruling by the Philadelphia third circuit which earlier this year decertified the so-called Georgine system agreed in 1994 for settling claims out of court. As a result of the Supreme Court's intervention, the Georgine procedure will continue to operate while the court review is in progress.

T&N said it expected asbestos litigation charges would continue to be incurred in line with previous estimates of around £25m for the second half of 1996. If the Supreme Court had rejected the request, Georgine would have been formally ended 21 days after the judgement.

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The 'R' word will return to haunt next President



Hamish McRae
in Chicago

One is struck by the contrast between the strength and quality of big corporations and the financial fragility of many families

The catchphrase, "It's the economy, stupid," seems more appropriate to the US presidential election than to the last. For the strength of the economy - very evident here in Chicago and the Midwest - seems to be President Clinton's strongest card. The ill-temper of the electorate seems to have faded, or rather the "winners" in the economy seem confident that they will continue to do well, while the "losers" won't vote.

But from an economic point of view perhaps the most interesting question is whether the surge of popular support for the incumbent marks a high point in US economic self-confidence. Put more strongly, could the election itself signal the end of the boom?

That is not to suggest a causal link between politics and economics, simply to say that there are obvious signs the US economy cannot continue on its present trajectory. It must slow down and the question is whether it will do so gently, or whether there will be some discontinuity or shock.

A few weeks ago the US financial magazine, *Baron's*, ran a story warning about a recession in the middle of next year - the "R" word is being discussed in the press. Foremost among the reasons for concern is expansion's sheer longevity, the third longest this century.

Other causes for unease include the level of share prices (of course), and the level of consumer debt at around 80 per cent of income. Consumers make mistakes, for the level of default on this debt is at record levels, too.

At any rate, the first half of the new presidency will be dominated by the "R" word: concern about the next recession. The economic forecasters are sketching two broad outlooks. One is that next year or 18 months will see a period of slow growth, say 2 per cent. There has been evidence that the economy has been slowing

to the last two months: the housing market has slipped, with a fall in new home sales; exports, while growing, have been curbed by the rise in the dollar since the spring; other leading indicators of the economy which US economists examine, like the Chicago Purchasing Manager's Index, have been falling in recent months, suggesting less buoyant expectations within manufacturing industry.

Perhaps most importantly, employment growth (what Americans call non-farm payrolls) seems to have tailed off, and unemployment, at what to European eyes is an evocative 5.2 per cent, may hold at that level, rather than fall further. It may be possible to squeeze unemployment lower still, but it must be close to the level at which wage inflation will start to show through.

This first group of economy-watchers takes the view that these figures show a sufficient slowing of the economy for there to be no need to increase interest rates by more than a token amount in the next few months. Result: a soft landing.

The second group looks at the same numbers but sees a different outcome. They think that wage inflation will become an increasing concern. The year-on-year rise in hourly earnings may reach 4 per cent, which would cause alarm in the Federal Reserve. They think that strong wage growth will underpin consumption and that this will start to show through in greater inflation. Eventually, they expect that the Fed will be forced to tighten policy, and some argue that a small, early dip into recession next year will be safer for the long-term health of the economy than delay in increasing interest rates - and perhaps a deeper recession in 1998/1999.

It would be nice at this stage to give a judgement as to the probability of recession next year - whether the optimists or the pessimists are right. But nobody can know. Further peering into the mass of economic data that the US economy generates makes things worse, for the volume of short-term information make it impossible to see the longer-term trend. But two things would strike the European visitor to the US at this time. One is the contrast between the quality and financial position of large US corporations, and the financial fragility of the position of many US families. The other is the assumption of continued financial stability; that the low-interest, low-inflation, steady growth world will continue.

The contrast shows in the difference between company indebtedness, half its level relative to profits compared with 10 years ago, and personal indebtedness, 50 per cent higher than it was then and at an all-time peak. While companies have cleaned up their balance

sheets, people have not. So there is a very robust company sector able to cope with tough times, but individuals or families who run their affairs in a much less prudent manner. Individuals say they are concerned about insecurity when questioned in polls, but act as though they are not.

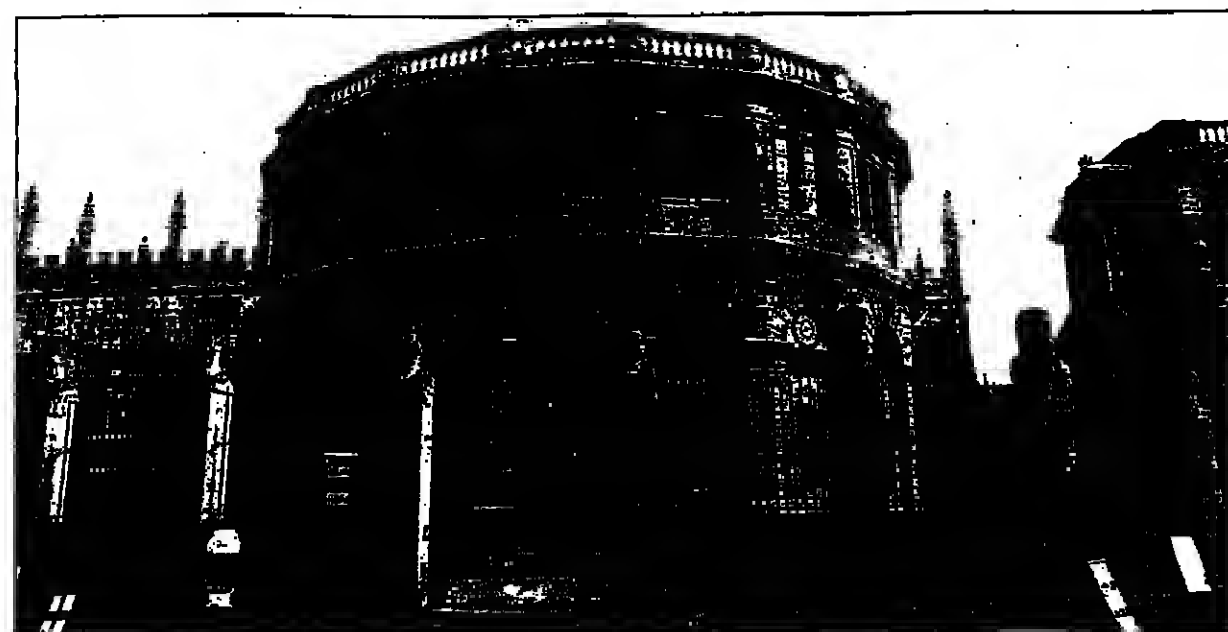
The worry, therefore, is that if there is some unexpected shock such as a rise in short-term interest rates or a sharp fall on Wall Street, companies will be fine, but people won't. A rise in short-term rates in the States would not hit the housing market as it would in the UK because mortgages are not so closely linked to short-term interest rates. But consumer borrowing is linked and so a rise would have an enormous impact on that. Further, a large proportion of personal assets are in mutual fund accounts, which people use as bank accounts. Imagine having most spare cash held not in a building society or bank, but in a unit trust.

The other odd feature is the assumption of stability. Britons know the pound can plunge and that interest rates can go up as well as down.

In the US, perhaps particularly in the Midwest, it is different. The economy carries on regardless of what happens in Washington.

The continued competence of the Fed is taken as read. Maybe this is a function of the central bank having a fair measure of independence, or the widespread assumption that the result of today's election will be the continued balanced ticket - a Democrat president and a Republican congress.

But it may also be that Americans have forgotten about economic shocks. The last four years have seen uninterrupted, steady growth with very little signs of inflation. This election may not mark the end of this slow boom, but it would be absolutely astounding were there to be another four years like the last.



Great debate: The Sheldonian Theatre, where the dons will gather to discuss Wafic Said's gift

Dons up in arms over new school

Spare a thought for Wafic Said, the Saudi businessman who has donated £20m to Oxford University to found the Said Business School.

A meeting of the university's dons in the Sheldonian Theatre today will debate the proposed location of the new school. Mr Said was involved in the £20m Al-Yamamah arms deal with Saudi Arabia, but never received commission or payments.

A number of the academics are angry that the proposed school, housing 500 students and 150 MBAs, will be built on what little green land is left in the middle of the city. Others are not so sure about the study of business and note that the university has had to stump up £18m itself for the school while the Bodleian Library is crying out for cash.

Alexander Murray, a mild-mannered medieval history doo, will be the first to oppose the plan today. But he is at pains to stress that he admires the work of John Kay, currently the head of London Economics, the consultancy, who is due to head up the new school.

The point is that the land for the new building on Mansfield Road was sold to the university by Merton College in 1964 so it could be

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

kept as playing fields. Mr Murray says the first thing the dons, who have ultimate power in the university, knew about the plan was when it was announced as a *fait accompli* in July.

"I would have thought that when establishing a business school, ethics are very important. There was an element of double dealing in the way the plan was announced, and damage to the environment here. I think this is distinctly off-side."

Will the dons humiliate Mr Said as they did Margaret Thatcher when they overturned her honorary degree in the late 1980s?

Nice to see the founder of the *Independent's* business section, Baroness Hogg, has outed up yet another job, this time non-executive director of GKN.

No doubt she will bring her customary efficiency to the new post. Having completed a five-year stint as head of the Downing Street Policy Unit in 1995, she is due to succeed John Kay as chairman of London Economics. She is a coo-exec at the National Provident Institution and the

Foreign and Colonial Smaller Companies Trust. She is also a member of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee and the Councils of the Royal Economic Society and the Institute of Fiscal Studies.

Makes me feel tired just typing it. Who said analysts couldn't be bribed? At BT's merger extravaganza on Sunday, a euphoric Sir Peter Bonfield sealed a successful analysts' briefing by passing round the champagne. Hacks waiting in a scrum outside the door heard jubilant applause from the analysts as the bubbly was passed round. One said afterwards: "It was very good too, nice and dry."

No doubt this was a stunt by BT's slick head of press, Ted (let's start the meal with a glass of champagne) Graham. Unfortunately it didn't wash with the suspicious hacks who, when offered the same booze, turned up their noses.

Oprah is about to launch in the UK. And we're not talking about the American talk show host. It stands for

Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority, a body which will go live in April 1997, designed to protect the interests of 10 million people in the UK's 200,000 occupational pensions schemes.

Caroline Johnson, chief executive of Opra, has appointed a number of people. Joe Robertson, previously a casework director for the Pensions Ombudsman, becomes regulatory director. He is joined by Roger Hills, formerly a detective chief superintendent. Opra says he "will be in charge of intelligence and heavy investigations". Cripes. You have been warned.

Andrew Neil, former editor of the *Sunday Times*, has been commissioned to write a 14,000-word article on his ex-employer, Rupert Murdoch, for the American magazine *Vanity Fair*. The fee? \$50,000.

But Mr Neil has already gone on about Mr Murdoch in his autobiography, *Full Disclosure*, which has not been published in the US. It shouldn't take too long to reproduce all the Murdoch bits for the mag. Not a bad for a couple of hours' work.

John Willcock

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
US	154.93	12.10	33.30	100.00	
Canada	2.8599	54.49	54.56	133.58	34.23
Germany	2.4700	54.49	54.56	133.58	34.23
France	6.4294	57.183	59.565	119.84	26.58
Italy	202.03	31.45	33.23	158.83	28.35
Japan	167.40	91.87	278.27	173.79	49.47
ECU	12.989	21.98	66.61	126.79	12.14
Belgium	36.234	6.10	7.15	29.17	44.48
Denmark	55.736	222.77	65.556	58.31	29.79
Netherlands	27.336	76.68	229.25	169.63	39.37
Ireland	0.9967	5.1	16.10	16.90	6.3
Norway	33.40	160.90	390.27	63.97	18.69
Spain	202.04	32.01	31.48	127.47	40.40
Sweden	10.872	5.8	44.33	66.014	41.18
Switzerland	2.0933	80.72	233.220	126.93	40.37
Australia	2.0295	10.16	15.25	12.706	14.16
Malaysia	4.1829	9.52	240.13	7.224	2.0
Hong Kong	4.2123	9.52	240.13	7.224	2.0
New Zealand	2.2327	64.71	55.68	14.03	97.99
Saudi Arabia	6.176	0.0	0.0	3.7505	1.4
Singapore	2.376	0.0	0.0	1.473	24.19

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	16470	0.9959			
Austria	16.532	1.7434			
Brazil	1.5252	1.0273			
China	1.0675	9.2300			
Egypt	5.6322	3.3351			
Finland	7.4242	4.5426			
Ghana	2.5722	17.330			
Greece	3.7146	4.7330			
India	58.752	36.570			
Kuwait	4.2433	0.2993			

Forward rates quoted here are at a discount, subject from spot rate. The dollar rate is high as at 2 p.m. Dollar rates are in US dollars. For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0201 331 3333. Call 0201 331 3333 for the latest foreign exchange rates.

Interest Rates

Interest Rates						
UK	Germany	US	Japan			
Base	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.75%	Discount
France	Lombard	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	Discount	0.50%
Italy	Prime	5.00%	Discount	3.25%	Discount	2.50%
Denmark	Prime	5.00%	Spot	Switzerland	3.00%	
Netherlands	Discount	3.25%	10-Day Repo	6.75%	Switzerland	
Advances	Discount	3.25%	Sweden	Discount	1.00%	
			Repo (Ave)	4.60%	Lombard	4.25%

Bond Yields									
Country	3yr	yield	10yr	yield	Country	3yr	yield	10yr	yield
UK	7 1/4	7 3/4	7 1/8	7 7/8	Netherlands	6 1/4	4 1/8	6 1/8	5 1/8
US	6 1/4	6 3/8	7 1/4	6 3/4	Spain	10 1/4	6 4/8	10 1/8	7 1/8
Japan	5 5/8	5 3/4	5 1/4	5 7/8	Italy	6 1/4	5 1/8	6 1/8	5 3/8
Australia	6 1/4	6 3/8	7 1/4	7 3/8	Poland	5 1/4	4 1/8	7 1/8	6 1/8
Germany	8 25/32	5 5/8	6 25/32	5 5/8	Sweden	13 1/4	6 4/8	6 1/8	7 3/8
France	5 1/4	4 5/8	7 25/32	6 5/8	EU OAT	6	5 2/8	7 1/4	6 1/4

Yields calculated on local basis

Source: Bloomberg

Money Market Rates						
	OTW/ht	7 Day	1 Month	3	6 Months	1 Yr

Bond Yields

Country	10yr yield	10yr yield	10yr yield	10yr yield	10yr yield
UK	7.24	7.74	7.72	Netherlands	6.74
US	6.17	6.07	6.14	France	6.74
Japan	5.64	1.04	3.1	Poland	9.12
Australia	6.81	1.73	7.2	Belgium	5.42
Germany	6.25	5.98	6.25	Sweden	6.45
France	5.14	4.98	5.98	ECU	6.22

Money Market Rates

Overnight	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Bank	2.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Bank	2.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Bank	2.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Bank	2.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1
Bank	2.6	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1

Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Australia	2.0295	10.16	15.25	12.706	14.16
Belgium	36.234	6.10	7.15	29.17	44.48
Canada	2.8599	54.49	54.56	133.58	34.23
China	1.0675	9.2300			
Denmark	55.736	222.77	65.556	58.31	29.79
Egypt	5.6322	3.3351			
Finland	7.4242	4.5426			
Ghana	2.5722	17.330			
Greece	3.7146	4.7330			
India	58.752	36.570			
Kuwait	4.2433	0.2993			

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Life FTSE Index Option

Series	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Commodity Indices

Index	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Long Put	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Unit Trust	Price	Change	Unit Trust	Price	Change
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00
Long Call	100.00	100.00	Long Put	100.00	100.00

Industrial Metals

Metal	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Aluminium	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Copper	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Lead	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Nickel	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Platinum	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Silver	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Precious Metals

Metal	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Gold	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Platinum	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Silver	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Palladium	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Rhodium	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Rosetta	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Agricultural

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Wheat	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Barley	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Maize	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Soybeans	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Corn	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Canola	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Other Softs

Commodity	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement	High/Low	Settlement
Wool	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Rubber	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
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sport

Difficult art makes bigger splash

'Synchro' is no longer the laughing stock of sport, says Mike Rowbottom

The code of behaviour at Wigan's international pool was violated at the weekend. While those in the water refrained from running, petting, bombing, shoving, pushing, ducking, spitting and smoking - at least as far as one could judge - the ban on acrobatics was flagrantly disregarded.

With more athletic endeavour than ever before, 101 competitors in what was the 22nd National Synchronised Swimming Championships went through their unlikely motions, watched by a small but knowledgeable audience.

It is 12 years since the sport bobbed into the public consciousness at the 1984 Olympics. Its peculiar combination of strenuous activity and a fixed grin quickly established it as a target for ridicule. Carolyn Wilson, one of the two British competitors in Los Angeles, remembers very clearly the reaction in media circles at the time.

"We got some quite negative publicity from people like Des Lynam," she recalled. "That is the risk run by all sports with an artistic element. People have an opinion about it."

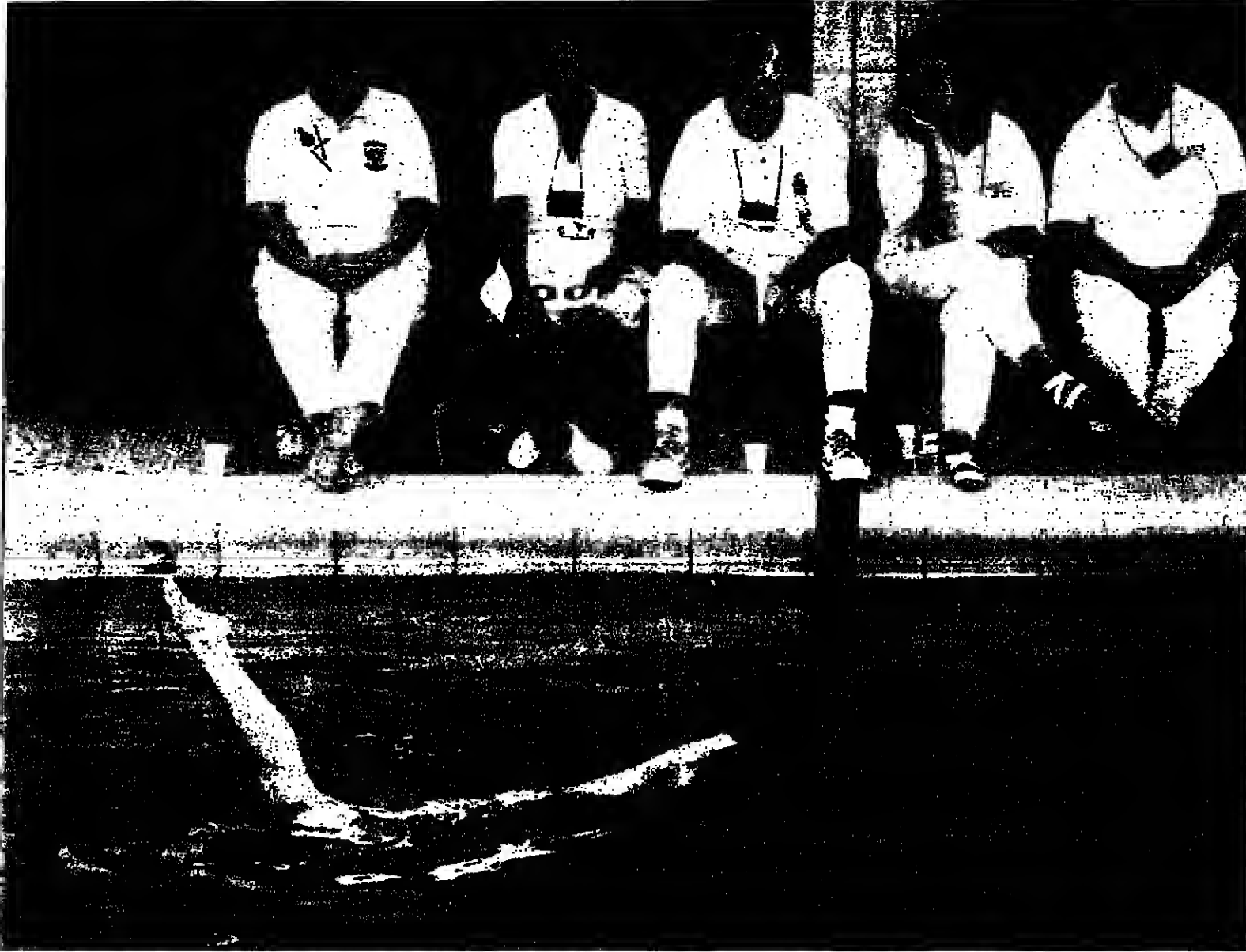
"We are used to seeing sport in terms of men grovelling about on the rugby field, but sport shouldn't just be about sweating and grimacing. It can also be about people enjoying themselves."

Sweating and grimacing will never have a place in the world of synchro, but those who run the sport have been smart enough to realise sequins and smiles is also a losing combination in the long term.

In an effort to counteract the sport's glamorous excesses and absurdities, the emphasis has been shifted towards technical expertise, which now carries 60 per cent of marks in competition, leaving artistic impression as the lesser element.

The sport as a whole now reacts to sequins like Dracula to a crucifix. Costumes must be of a minimum size after the embarrassments of the late Eighties. And as for the smiling, let Andrea Holland, a former European champion who coached Britain's 1992 Olympic team, explain it.

"All that started because this



The judges watch a competitor go through her paces at the National Synchronised Swimming Championships in Wigan. Photograph: Robert Hallam

is a sport that you have to try and make look easy, so people would smile to impress the judges. Nowadays, however, judges are better informed and know what technical aspects to look for.

"And if the routine is set to serious music, then the expressions have to reflect that. We don't want smiling all the time," she said.

The sport has also acted to discourage freakish displays of breath-holding, another time-honoured tactic to impress the judges. Such tactics were leading to instances of girls blacking out - oo ooo occasion, in Sweden, a competitor died after hyperventilating.

In tandem with these changes,

there has been an increasing awareness of the need for proper endurance training. Here is a typical day at training camp for Britain's elite performers, as described by Ann Webb, one of the British coaches:

"Three-mile run before breakfast. Then 200 stand-ups on chairs to warm up. Then three hours working in the pool. Lunch. Three more hours swimming. Then a ooo and a half hour walk-through [of the movements]."

One of those regularly putting in that kind of training session is Adele Carlsen, a 20-year-old member of the Farnborough-based Rushmoor Royals, who retained their team title at the weekend and

recently featured on the television show *How Do They Do That?*

The knee-jerk reaction to her sport which she often encounters is something which clearly annoys her.

"When I have been training for nine hours in a freezing cold pool, pushing myself to the limits, and someone comes up to me and says what I do is stupid, that it's just a matter of smiling, sticking my legs in the air and splashing around in the water, then it does make me angry," she said.

The routine which Carlsen and her colleagues went through - a celebration of the Atlanta Games, with elements representing running, javelin

throwing and high jumping - was faintly ironic, given that Britain missed out on qualifying for the team competition, which is now the sole Olympic event, by one place.

For a sport which, in terms of public profile, sits beneath the surface between Olympics, such a failure can be costly. Carlsen, for instance, had to be funded directly by the Amateur Swimming Association this year after her Sports Aid Foundation grant was discontinued. "When we failed to reach the Olympics, they didn't want to know," she said.

"I don't think the Government in this country takes sport that seriously," she added. "They think that we are still in

the 1930s, and that Britain can just turn up and win off an hour a day's training. But so much has changed in this sport in the last 10 years. To do it properly, you have to be full-time."

It is a familiar situation, replicated in almost any sport you care to name in this country. But the continuing international popularity of synchronised swimming - it has been the first sport to sell out at each of the last three Olympics - is likely to provide the necessary stimulus to the domestic scene, if only every four years.

In the meantime, the 23rd National Synchronised Swimming Championships are in need of a sponsor...

Julian steals Lara's glory

Cricket

Brian Lara was upstaged by a savage display of power hitting from the Surrey and former Australian pace bowler Brendon Julian as the West Indies lost their opening tour match yesterday to the Australian Cricket Board Chairman's XI.

Lara opened his account in Australia with a fluent 66 in the West Indies' total of 256 for 9 from their 50 overs but it was not enough to prevent them from slipping to a three-wicket defeat at Lilac Hill, Perth.

It was an embarrassing result for the West Indies against a side fielding three retired Test fast bowlers in the West Indian Michael Holding and Australia's Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson.

After reducing the Chairman's XI to 95 for 6 in the 25th over, the West Indies appeared poised for a comfortable victory. But Julian transformed the match by smashing six sixes and seven fours in an unbeat-

en 96 from only 52 balls to sweep his side to victory at 258 for 7 with eight overs to spare. Julian was denied a century when his partner, Thomson, hit the winning runs.

The Worcestershire captain and former Australian Test batsman Tom Moody contributed a responsible 66 as the pair added 148 in 15 overs for the seventh wicket. They were particularly harsh on the off-spin of Carl Hooper and the slow left-arm bowling of Jimmy Adams, who between them conceded 79 runs in eight overs.

The fast bowler Ian Bishop took 4 for 44, which included the wicket of the former Australian captain Allan Border for seven, but he lacked support.

West Indies play Western Australia in Perth later this week in one-day and three-day matches as part of their preparations for the first Test in Brisbane, starting on 22 November. **WEST INDIES** 1st Test: 258 for 9 (B Lara 66, R Sarwan 31, R Holder 21; B Julian 3-53, Australian Cricket Board Chairman's XI 258 for 7 (B Julian 96, T Moody 66; I Bishop 4-44). Chairmen's XI won by 3 wickets.

Cardiff work extra hard for victories

Ice hockey

STEVE PINDER

Cardiff needed overtime to win both their Superleague matches at the weekend. Against Nottingham, both sides had players suspended after last month's ill-tempered meeting between them and both seemed cagey, doubtless aware that anything more than minor penalties would incur the league's wrath.

The game was level 2-2 at the end of the third period. Nottingham dominated in overtime but, on Cardiff's first real attack, with just a minute left, Ivan Manuil scored the winner.

The following day, against Newcastle, Cardiff were again taken to overtime. This time Ian Cooper scored the winner.

Newcastle's other game, against Sheffield, also went to sudden-death. Newcastle pulled their netminder in the third period and came back from 2-0 down. Neither team could score during overtime and the game finished a tie.

Blalock flies in to give Eagles a lift

Basketball

RICHARD TAYLOR

The merry-go-round of Americans flying in and out of Newcastle League clubs takes another turn tomorrow when Ralph Blalock goes straight from airport to basketball court, to make his debut for Newcastle Eagles against Manchester Giants in the 7-Up Trophy.

Eagles, part of Sir John Hall's stable of sports clubs at Newcastle, have nosedived after winning the first four games of the season. Saturday's 102-70 National Cup win over First Division Ware Rebels ended a three-game losing streak.

Blalock, a 6ft 5in 22-year-old posted impressive statistics at Boston State University and led the team in scoring and three-pointers in his final year.

Blalock's arrival means Newcastle have released another American, Anthony Joseph, who has been snapped up by Crystal Palace, who tried to sign him at the start of the season.

RACING RESULTS

NEWCASTLE

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Glover sets Fox on November run

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

By the time the clocks go back Jeremy Glover's horses are usually going forward, and quickly. The Nottinghamshire trainer has earned a reputation as a man who comes swooping into play as the nights draw in, a distinction that is exemplified by four wins in the Cambridgeshire at leaf-strewn Newmarket.

For a person of his limited artillery, Glover's record in the first leg of the Autumn Double is quite astounding.

The former professional jockey of 18 years has held a licence for only 12 seasons (and that after an application to become a Jockey Club starter in 1978 was rejected), yet his name is etched alongside Balhaus

(1987), Rambo's Hall (1989 and 1992) and now Clifton Fox, who won this year's race a month ago.

"We have winners right the way through the season, but my horses always seem to come to themselves, be at their best, in the autumn," Glover said yesterday. "I recognize that and if I have a handicapper we plan it from a long way out. This horse had the Cambridgeshire as his target from the start of the year and he was improving enough to beat the handicapper. I just had to get him right at the right time."

The 52-year-old trainer now has more bookmakers' sponsorship money in the windfall as Clifton Fox is pointed at Doncaster on Saturday. Certain participation will not be con-

firmed until later in the week, though Glover wants to run, especially as his four-year-old prize such a good account of himself in a Listed contest at Newmarket on Friday.

"There were four of them really going at it from six furlongs out and I think he was in the van

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: So Intrepid (Racing 3.35)
NBI: Catrin (Racing 2.05)

for too long," Glover said of Clifton Fox, who has beaten only two necks. "He had a harder race than he had in the Cambridgeshire, but he's all right."

The colt himself, it must be said, may have a different report

on his well-being, as Nigel Day, Friday's partner, was suspended for two days for using his whip with unreasonable frequency.

If Clifton Fox needs recuperation this week he could have no better host than the Pinewood Stables at Carburton near Worksop. Next door there is a slab of National Trust territory they call Clumber Park, 20,000 acres of parkland which means the Glover string really ever comes across its own hoofprints.

Dato Star may be housed in the more horse-intensive environs of Malton, but he too transported a sinner last week. Malcolm Jefferson's horse, who was runner-up in the November Handicap 12 months ago, was ridden in his preparatory race at Nottingham 12 days ago by

Kieren Fallon. The Irishman dropped his hands to lose second place and was subsequently himself dropped from the racecourse.

Nevertheless, Fallon will emerge from his suspension with brown-papered package under his arm before the weekend, and again rides Dato Star even though he is likely to put up a lb overweight.

"I don't think lb will make a lot of difference and it's better to have him carry a little bit of overweight than to have a fresh jockey," Jefferson said yesterday. "Kieren knows him so well and I think his experience of the horse is worth more than 1lb."

After Saturday, Dato Star, the winner of last year's Festival bumper, will return to a hurdling career which has so far

been limited to two outings (and one completion).

"Depending on how he is I may even run him the following week in a handicap hurdle at Cheltenham," Jefferson said. "Otherwise I might wait for the Bula. Ideally I'd like him to have about four races, nicely spaced out, so that he can get some jumping experience before the Champion Hurdle."

Twenty horses, headed by the David Elsworth-trained top-weight Matar, have stood their ground for the Tote Silver Trophy at Cheltenham on Saturday. The sponsors yesterday installed Castle Sweep as the 4-1 favourite for the extended two and a half mile hurdle race. Jersey Pinner, who trained last year's winner 40-1 Jibber The Kibber, represented this time by Jet Rules and Arithmetic.



Clifton Fox: 12-1 for Saturday's big race at Doncaster

Gosden on council

John Gosden has been co-opted to the council of the Racehorse Owners Association, it was announced yesterday.

The position will take effect immediately with the Newmarket trainer representing the in-

terests of the Maktoum family, Dubai's rulers.

The Maktoums—the leading owners in Britain—have expressed a desire to stay in closer contact with developments within British racing.

Bookmakers' ante-post lists are racing's futures market. Readers can catch up with the latest developments—best prices are in bold—in this sphere with *The Independent's* Tuesday service.

November Handicap Hurdle is a top-priced 6-1 with Coral—William Hill, Ladbrokes and the Tote go 5-1—while Present Arms is 8-1 (Tote)—Coral go 6-1. Clifton Fox is 12-1 (Coral/William Hill)—Lad-

brokes go 8-1—while Snow Princess is 20-1 (Tote)—Coral and Ladbrokes go 12-1. Haysa Ya Kefah is 25-1 (Tote)—Ladbrokes go 14-1.

Silver Trophy Handicap Hurdle: Castle Sweep is 4-1 (Tote)—Coral go 3-4—while Silver Staged is 12-1 (Coral)—the Tote go 7-1. Arithmetic and Yarnbrook are 33-1 (Coral)—the Tote go 14-1.

HYPERION
1.35 Double Expresso
2.05 Vire Verde
2.35 Enraved

GOING: Soft to Firm (firm in places).
STALLS: 1st and 12th. Inside, outside—centre.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High numbers may be kept up to and including one mile.

11.40 AM: 1.35 Double Expresso (1.35) and 2.05 Vire Verde (2.05) will be kept up to and including one mile.

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sport

He does not want to clutter up the England squad with players who are superior to those he has nurtured over the years

One of the most striking aspects of what is already a remarkable season is the impact which rugby league players have made. Sometimes they are players who have re-transferred their allegiance, such as Scott Quinnell of Richmond (as he hopes will turn out to be the case permanently) or Viliami Tuigamala of Waspas. Sometimes they are performers who had never played until regularly before this season and will shortly return to league, such as Gary Connolly of Harlequins. They have always transformed their club's play for the better.

There has been a curious reluctance to acknowledge this truth. After the first Wigan-Bath match in the summer, followers of union said that

of course Wigan beat Bath at league. It was only to be expected. But Bath would beat Wigan at union, although maybe not so comprehensively.

Wigan's triumph in the Middlesex Sevens caused some people to revise their forecast, and to admit that perhaps Wigan might beat Bath after all at Twickenham. Superficially, however, things turned out as had been expected originally, with Bath winning and Wigan showing an unexpected ineptitude in the set-pieces, particularly the scrums.

But the superiority of the Wigan players individually, the backs at any rate, became evident in the second half and even more clear in the last quarter. The league players were

stronger, faster, fitter and, above all, more creative. Jason Robinson could sidestep, swerve or jink round not just one opponent but several — an art some of us thought had gone with Gerald Davies.

This season, Robinson has been delighting the crowds at Bath, playing first on the wing and, more recently, at full-back. So has the other former Wigan player Henry Paul at centre. Both he and his brother, Robbie of Harlequins, are ineligible to play for England because they are New Zealanders. The same goes for Tuigamala.

But of eligible former league players, Jack Rowell, the England coach, has recalled only Jim Fallon of Richmond to the national squad.



ALAN WATKINS

In my opinion, Jon Beasley of Newcastle, formerly of Halifax RL and before that of Sale (where, in 1988, he won three England caps), is at least as good a wing. Or present form. Robinson, who is much

younger, is the clear superior of both. So far, Martin Offiah of Bedford has not set the fields alight and has been troubled by a mysterious toe injury. Nevertheless, I have little doubt about the composition of the strongest English three-quarter line: Robinson, Connolly, Will Carling and Offiah.

Offiah has already said he is free to play for England. There may be doubts about how free Robinson is. Certainly Connolly is due to go back north in the new year. But if Wigan will release him, there is no legal reason why he should not play for England in the Five Nations. Why does not Rowell try to exercise his persuasive skills, for which he is apparently well known?

The answer, I am afraid, is that he does not want to. He does not want to clutter up his precious squad with players who are manifestly superior to those he has nurtured over the years. I agree — the advent of Robinson, Connolly and Offiah would undoubtedly be hard on Jon Sleightholme, Jeremy Guscott, Phil de Glanville, Tony Underwood and Adeyayo Adebayo. But life is full of such hardships. They are not on that account unjust.

Kevin Bowring of Wales does not have this luxury of talent at his disposal. He should welcome the former league players. Yet he also is approaching them with the apprehension of an old man confronted by a nubile bride. So far, only Scott

Gibbs of Swansea has been fully readmitted to the fold, with David Young of Cardiff and Richard Webster of Bath hovering on the fringes.

It is evident that Wales' best centre combination is Gibbs with Allan Bateman, who is playing brilliantly for Richmond, outside him. Scott Quinnell of the same club will presumably be back at No 8 once his payment problems have been settled.

The best Welsh back line would then be: Gareth Llewellyn (Harlequins), Craig Quinnell (Richmond), Paul Moriarty (Swansea), Scott Quinnell (Richmond), Richard Webster (Bath). Bowring, the victim of Welsh parochialism as much as of anti-league prejudice, is even less likely than Rowell to do the right thing.

Rowell and the men who would be king

Chris Hewett on the problems facing the England coach, who names his new captain today

Jack Rowell is on his Jack Jones, so to speak. Two and a half years after inheriting a solid, functional and generally successful national side from his predecessor, Geoff Cooke, the England coach now finds himself in the uncomfortable position of having to back his own judgement on the most exposed selection issue of them all: the captaincy.

What is more, he must make some shrewd decisions on the shape of his side for the Five Nations' Championship while keeping one eye on the 1999 World Cup. Rowell went to the 1995 tournament in South Africa with Cooke's legacy almost completely intact and while he moved gingerly into reshape and remodel mode last season, he still had to pull an old nag by the name of Dean Richards out of the knacker's yard to save the day at Murrayfield. When he looks down from the high wire this time, that particular safety net will be conspicuous by its absence.

The new leader is due to be named at Twickenham today and the job description has changed almost completely since Cooke appointed Will Carling in 1988. Indeed, Carling transformed it himself through his curious mix of undeniable glamour, naked ambition and almost laughable naivete. You do not hob-nob with royalty and make public jokes about the flatulent habits of faintly ridiculous but still influential people and then hope that the front pages will leave you alone.

Assuming that Rowell has decided against appointing a stop-gap captain — and 1999 is far enough away to invalidate the need for one — he must not only choose a partner with whom he feels he can work and who can handle the post-Carling pressures but one capable of bridging the gap between the selectors and the squad. That gap was allowed to grow dangerously wide at times last season as Carling distanced himself from his coach, and now that Rowell is in a position to name his own man, he had better get it right.

Lawrence Dallaglio has been the front-runner since Carling stepped down after victory over the Irish last March. Confident, approachable and highly capable in all three back-row positions, he forged his leadership skills on the hoof by substituting a Wasp side that was on



Lawrence Dallaglio

Age: 24; Club: Wasps; Caps: 6. Red-hot favourite for the succession since Will Carling bowed out last spring, Dallaglio is the youngest of the obvious contenders but his versatility as a player, combined with a measured approach off the field, persuaded Jack Rowell to describe him as the "English Francois Pienaar". The best long-term option.



Jason Leonard

Age: 28; Club: Harlequins; Caps: 49. Hugely popular prop forward who, like Dallaglio, gives the England selectors elbow room through an ability to play in more than one position. Leonard has made more international appearances than all his main rivals put together and his success in bonding a disparate Quins side this season makes him a decent outside threat.



Phil de Glanville

Age: 28; Club: Bath; Caps: 16. Obvious captaincy material from the day he joined Bath from college in 1990, de Glanville fits precisely into the traditional mould of an England skipper. He has a far harder edge than many imagine, but the resurgent form of both Carling and his own club-mate, Jeremy Guscott, leaves him vulnerable on the selection front.



Tim Rodber

Age: 27; Club: Northampton; Caps: 25. There was a time when Rodber's army background and fierce patriotic fervour persuaded many to stamp him with the Future England Captain label. Then came his sending off in Port Elizabeth in 1994 — he was only the second man to be dismissed while wearing the national jersey — and he is still making up the lost ground.

the point of collapse in the aftermath of Rob Andrew's acrimonious departure for Newcastle.

In truth, Dallaglio has not enjoyed the best of months. After a bright enough start to the campaign he picked and lost arguments with referees during the defeats by Gloucester and Cardiff and then found himself on the wrong end of an embarrassing pasting in Limerick as Munster effectively ended Wasps' interest in the European Cup.

Since then, though, the Londoners have worked themselves back up to speed and if Rowell

really did make up his mind on the captaincy back in September, as he insists, then England may well have a half-Italian skipper by this afternoon.

The hindling obvious does not always appeal to a man of Rowell's paradoxical character, however, hence the presence of one or two dark horses to the fore. The word on the street alternated between Phil de Glanville, the Bath captain, and Tim Rodber, his counterpart at Northampton, before coming up with a wholly new suggestion in the shape of Jason Leonard, the most popular forward in the current

squad as well as the most experienced.

Once Rowell has gone public on his choice, he then has to find himself a side. If that sounds harsh in the light of England's Five Nations victory last season, a glance at the all-important spine of the team confirms the sentiment. All five central positions are up for grabs, from full-back through the half-backs and hooker to No 8, and if anyone tells Big Jack that competition for places is what coaches are supposed to yearn for, he might well get a thick ear.

While he steers well clear of

entering into a public debate on the matter, Rowell is deeply concerned about a number of key positions outside the scrum. Tim Stimpson of Newcastle is within touching distance of a debut at full-back against Italy on 23 November but, much to the England hierarchy's disgust, his goal-kicking opportunities at club level have been seriously restricted by Andrew. That makes it awkward for Rowell to select the non-kicking Mike Catt at stand-off, even though his running skills would be in perfect harmony with a dynamic three-quarter line almost soaked in pace.

England are better placed at scrum-half, especially now that the supremely arrogant Austin Healey is finding his feet at Leicester and proving himself a worthy contender alongside Kyran Bracken, Andy Gommarsall and the incumbent, Matt Dawson. But there is a decision to be made at hooker, where Mark Regan is struggling both with injury and with the brilliant Gloucester prospect Phil Greening. And that No 8? Nightmare. Rodber can draw on the experience of 25 caps but has shown nothing to suggest that he is playing better than Chris Steadby, Tony Diprose or

Steve Ojomoh, whose European Cup performance against Dax 10 days ago was nothing short of world class. All this and Ben Clarke too.

Elsewhere, the options are more straightforward. Jon Sleightholme and Adeyayo Adebayo are expected to form a Bath partnership on the wings with Tony Underwood applying pressure on both. Carling should resume his midfield partnership with Jeremy Guscott; Graham Rowntree and Leonard can expect to stay in the front row despite the best efforts of Leicester's Darren Garforth, and if Rowell de-

cides that Garath Archer's discipline has taken him beyond the pale, Simon Shaw of Bristol will probably partner Martin Johnson at lock.

But whereas John Hart can reel off his New Zealand spine with his eyes shut — Cullen, Mehrtens, Marshall, Fitzpatrick, Brooke, end of story — Rowell must perm five from the best part of 20 in an effort to give England a new backbone. Until he settles on that quintet, his side will continue to look seriously vulnerable both in the European theatre and, more importantly, on the world stage.

Andrew's threat ensures postponement

Rob Andrew was not exactly renowned for his gambler's instinct during the decade he spent in the England team, but he has acquired a mean line in brinkmanship since falling under the influence of Sir John Hall at Newcastle, writes Chris Hewett. Yesterday his latest venture into the risk business paid healthy dividends when his club's fixture with Rotherham was postponed from this weekend until March.

Andrew had threatened to withdraw six of his players from international and representative duty this weekend after Rotherham insisted that the League

Two match between the two sides should go ahead as planned on Saturday.

With two Newcastle players, Gary Armstrong and Doddie Weir, in the Scotland squad for the Test with Australia, two more in the A squad who face the Junior Springboks on Friday, and another couple required for an Irish session in advance of the match with Western Samoa next Tuesday, Andrew forced the situation by pulling rank.

That led to some hurried discussions at national level and, according to a spokesman for the English professional clubs or-

ganisation (Epruc), the debate went all the way to the International Board, who sanctioned a fixture deferment. It now seems likely that Newcastle's home game with Richmond, the other favourites for promotion to League One, will be shifted from its current 18 January date because players from both sides are likely to be involved in the opening round of the Five Nations' Championship.

Meanwhile, Epruc officials will meet tomorrow to discuss setting up a fund for members most at risk from the bank manager. The political stand-off

between Epruc and the Rugby Football Union has delayed the signing of a multi-million pound broadcasting deal with BSkyB and has left several of the more vulnerable clubs staring into a financial black hole. Representatives from the richer outfits — Newcastle, Harlequins, Bath and Richmond among them — are likely to be asked to bail out the smaller fry with loans of up to £200,000.

Rory Jenkins, the uncapped Harlequins flanker, has been called into the England squad for tomorrow's training session at Bisham Abbey.

Wasps' need means Reed misses out

Andy Reed, the Scotland and Lions lock, yesterday became the latest casualty of the club versus country issue. The Wasps forward was originally named in the squad for the Scotland A match against South Africa A at Hawick on Friday night but is needed for his club's Anglo-Welsh League game at Pontypridd tomorrow and was not able to attend the training sessions.

Doug Morgan, the Scotland A team manager, announcing a squad of 21 for Friday's match, said: "We picked Reed initially in our squad but Wasps re-

quired him for their match on Wednesday night. I felt that this was not the ideal preparation for a Scotland A game. Proper preparation is vital and that means players attending squad sessions."

George Graham will miss the Scotland A game through injury. The former rugby league forward was selected to play against Australia last Wednesday but had to withdraw because of a calf injury.

The Scotland A squad shows several changes to the 21 on duty at Galashiels last Wednesday for the Australians' open-

ing tour match in Scotland. The significant newcomer among the backs is the wing James Craig, while also in the squad is Watsonians full-back Derrick Lee.

In the forwards, there is promotion for locks Stuart Grimes and Scott Aitken, who have performed well in Heineken European Cup matches this season, and there is a recall for the capped prop John Manson, who was out of action earlier this season through injury.

Injury-hit Australia will field tour replacement Tim Gavin

and their trailer in the side to play the Scottish Districts Select XV at McDiarmid Park in Perth today.

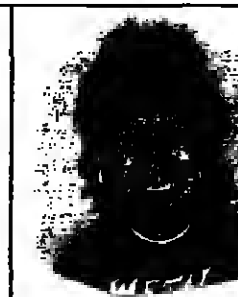
Gavin, the Wallaby back-row player has been summoned following injuries to both No 8s Mike Brial and Mark Connors.

But Gavin, normally a No 8, will pack down in the second row alongside John Welborn or Warwick Waugh. Dirk Williams, the tourists' 35-year-old trainer, has been drafted in to play at blind-side flanker.

Scotland A squad, Scotland Districts team, Digest, page 25

LOOK BACK IN ANGORA

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THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN JUST STICKING YOUR HEAD IN THE SAND

Mike Rowbottom on the lament of the synchronised swimmer

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL: Troubled England midfielder reveals 'the rage inside' that has driven him to seek counselling

Gascoigne enters the confessional

GLENN MOORE
Football Correspondent

Paul Gascoigne faced a few more of his demons yesterday: 30 newspaper reporters, two radio stations, and more television channels than most people can receive.

A confessional press conference after England's first day of training for Saturday's World Cup tie in Georgia was another small step on Gascoigne's road to redemption.

It followed a backwards move at the weekend, when Gascoigne lost much of the residual sympathy there is for him by "looking deep into his tortured soul" exclusively for the *News of the World*. There was, the newspaper announced, no fee - yet neither was there any mention of a contribution to charities supporting battered wives' refuges.

Representatives of the 40 million-plus Britons who do not read the Sunday tabloid were told yesterday that Gascoigne regretted "the thing that happened with my wife". He regretted "it" five times, but he could not quite bring himself to use the words "wife-beating".

Glenn Hoddle could. Stung by suggestions that by picking Gascoigne he had condoned the practice, he responded: "This does not send a message out that I am backing wife-beaters. I condone everything he has done. I am trying to ensure he never does it again."

The England coach "rode shotgun" alongside Gascoigne in Bisham Abbey's wood-panelled Elizabethan Room yesterday. Portraits of Charles II and his Portuguese wife, Catherine of Braganza, stared down from the walls flanked by the phalanx of TV crews.

Gascoigne looked stern when he entered, but gradually relaxed, even slipping in a couple of his deadpan jokes by the end of the 30-minute session.

"It has been a shaky weekend, but I'm pleased to be back in the squad. I could have been kicked out on my backside," he said. "I can't describe the rage inside, but I am getting counselling for it. I am getting two types of counselling: one is personal, one is with my wife."

"What happened with my wife I deeply regret and that will live with me forever. I don't blame the likes of the women's rights for wanting me to be kicked out of the squad. They had a right to say that and I have to live with that."

"It is hard to meet up with a stranger and talk about my problems, but I feel a better person for it already. People at the club [Rangers], the players here, have noticed it. It is helping me relax with opponents and referees."

"I'm under pressure a lot more than other players and have been so for about five to six years. I have just let everything bottle up inside me instead of coming out with things. The thing with my wife was my last straw and now I've started to sort it out and I'm really pleased."

"Tony [Adams] and Paul [Merson] - both recovering alcoholics - have said that coming out and talking about it helps. I reached the decision [to have counselling] because of what I did. I just could not believe that was me the following morning. I just had to get it sorted out."

"In the past I've done things which I've regretted, but I've tried to hide that by joking and pretending I didn't regret them. I want to think about things before I do them now. I want to be accepted as Paul Gascoigne the person as well as Paul Gascoigne the footballer. I only have five years left as a foot-

baller, then it is just Paul Gascoigne the person."

He denied that alcohol was at the root of his problems. "I can still have a drink," he said. "It is controlled, like when I'm out at a restaurant."

One hopes he knows what he is doing. It was after an afternoon at a restaurant, in Scotland's Gleneagles Hotel, that Gascoigne committed the assault on his wife, Sheryl, which left her with facial bruises and dislocated fingers.

Gascoigne, who had further counselling on Sunday, added: "In the past, I seemed to hate everybody for no apparent reason. That is one thing I am getting rid of, when I go on the pitch. I want it to be with a controlled aggression."

Whether he gets on the pitch on Saturday is another matter. Hoddle admitted he might be left out and said: "It would be a slight test for him, not one he would want, but maybe a test he needs."

"He's not hiding from it anymore. He will be judged further down the line - anyone can change for two weeks. I'm looking at 12 months, but he is already facing up to a lot of the issues which he has never done before."

"He is in the squad as part of the overall package. It is partly to help him to become a better player in the long term, but also to deal with these issues. I do not think leaving him out would have helped him or his family life."

Hoddle, who gave Adams permission to leave the camp for counselling on his drink problem yesterday, added: "I'm not an agony aunt. This is part of man management, looking at a player as a person, not just a player. I've always had that philosophy."

"In many ways, Paul is hitting his prime. If he can get his personal life together we could see a Paul Gascoigne nobody has seen yet. That would be fantastic. He will have to adjust his game. There are moments of magic he can still conjure up, and although they might be less frequent, he can be part of the jigsaw in many other ways."

It took an Italian journalist to raise the conundrum: "If he becomes an ordinary person, will he also become an ordinary footballer?"

One thought of Eric Cantona as Hoddle replied: "I don't know. We do not have a crystal ball to look into. Paul has been given a gift from an early age - many things have clogged him. If we can release them, he could yet show that there is another Paul Gascoigne even [better] than in his heyday at Tottenham."

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Minor football, page 27



Paul Gascoigne makes his presence felt by David Platt (left) in training yesterday, while Ian Wright watches from a distance. Photograph: Peter Jay

United rule out Giggs

Ryan Giggs and Nathan Blake have been excluded from the Wales squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against the Netherlands in Eindhoven.

Giggs, who has missed Manchester United's last six games with a calf strain, has been replaced by Birmingham's Jason Bowen, while the Liverpool youngster Lee Jones steps in for Blake of Sheffield United.

Colin Hendry has been passed fit to play in Scotland's World Cup qualifier against Sweden at Ibrox on Sunday. The Blackburn defender safely negotiated his comeback game against Liverpool on Sunday, after being absent for a month following a groin operation.

Peter Taylor, the England Under-21 manager, has lost four members of his squad for Friday's European Under-21 Championship qualifier against Georgia in Saturni due to injuries: Ben Thatcher (Wimbledon), Marcus Hall (Coventry), Chris Holland (Birmingham) and Phil Stamp (Middlesbrough). Taylor, who now has just 17 players at his disposal, will call up replacements today.

The Crewe striker, Brian Laudens, has been added to the Republic of Ireland's Under-21 squad for Saturday's match against Iceland at Dalymount Park. Dublin, Watford's David Connolly and Bournemouth's Owen Coll have pulled out.

Italy call for Ravanelli and Di Matteo

Fabrizio Ravanelli, the Middlesbrough striker, and the Chelsea midfielder Roberto Di Matteo are on their way to Sarajevo to play for Italy in a friendly against Bosnia tomorrow, writes Rupert Meehan.

Arrigo Sacchi, Italy's coach, has had to alter his squad as Juventus and Internazionale face Italian Cup replays tomorrow.

Also called up is Gianluigi Lentini, whose career was nearly ended by head injuries suffered in a car crash three years ago. Lentini, 27, currently with Atalanta on loan from Milan, last played for Italy in June 1993.

Ravanelli and Di Matteo, both regulars in Italy's World Cup side, were due to be rested for this trip - the first international at the Kosevo Stadium since the ceasefire in Sarajevo - but both have now had to abandon their week off.

Roberto Baggio, the former Italian international, was released from hospital yesterday after a scan showed no damage from a serious blow to the head received while playing for Milan against Atalanta on Sunday.

Manchester United's Jordi Cruyff has been dropped from the Dutch squad for Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Wales in Eindhoven. He was substituted at half-time in the Netherlands' 3-1 win in Cardiff last month. Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, who missed that match due to injury, is recalled; while Celtic's Pierre Van Hooijdonk, who scored twice as a late substitute at the Arms Park, is likely to start this time.

Rovers widen search

ALAN NIXON

Blackburn Rovers are to seek permission to approach three managers - Howard Kendall, Bruce Rioch and Peter Reid - about the vacancy at Ewood Park.

The Rovers owner Jack Walker and the chairman Robert Coar, who want the new man in position by the home game against Chelsea on 16 November, have shortlisted the trio for the job that could carry a £500,000 a year salary after being turned down by Terry Venables.

Sheffield United, Queen's Park Rangers and Sunderland are to be asked to give the go-ahead for negotiations to begin. Kendall, who has managed Rovers before, has a release clause in his contract should a Premier League side show interest in his services. Rioch works without a contract at QPR where he is Stewart Houston's No 2, while Reid, the outsider who has turned Sunderland around on a shoestring budget, is expected to be attracted by the chance to work

with virtually unlimited funds. A former Rover, Kenny Dalglish, who led the club to the championship in 1995, has been asked by Rangers to help them become one of the foremost clubs in Europe. The former Celtic and Liverpool forward has been offered a high-profile position helping to lure the Continent's top players to Ibrox.

Rangers' manager, Walter Smith, who rebuffed suggestions that Dalglish's arrival could put his own position under threat, said: "We had a meeting with Kenny Dalglish before the Ajax match last week. We have yet to arrange another meeting but that will be done shortly and hopefully we will be able to make an announcement."

Should Dalglish take up the offer, he would not be scouting for young talent; he would be put in charge of tracking established players and submitting any choices to Smith.

Tottenham are reported to be on the verge of paying Rosenborg £1.75m for the 19-year-old Norwegian striker Stefan Iversen. Aston Villa, meanwhile, are confident that Savo Milosevic's £4.5m transfer to Perugia will go

ahead after the forward completes his World Cup duty for Yugoslavia against the Czech Republic on Sunday.

Hartlepool, second from bottom in the Third Division, have sacked their manager Keith Houchen. The player-coach Mick Tait has taken over as caretaker, but the club are to advertise the position.

"It's a sad day, but these things happen," Houchen said. "I needed the players to be men on the pitch, but I'm afraid all too often they didn't do it for me. The fans need to get behind the chairman. Unfortunately, I have not always had their support from the terraces."

Ian Wallace, the former Scotland striker, will be hoping to win over Dumbarton's following after being appointed manager of the Scottish Second Division side. He takes over from Jim Fallon who resigned at the weekend after the 5-0 defeat at Livingston. Wallace, who commanded a £1m transfer fee when he moved from Coventry to Nottingham Forest, will have his work cut out. Dumbarton are the only Scottish League side yet to record a home victory.

Maradona's DIY drug tests

Diego Maradona, the former Argentinian captain, has admitted taking drugs on a regular basis and missing matches when his own private dope tests have been positive.

Maradona, 36, who says he has been taking cocaine since 1983, told the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* that recent allegations that his urine sample was switched with another player's after a routine post-match test on 11 August were unfounded.

The other player's sample, from Boca's opponents Estudiantes, was found to be positive. Maradona, whose test was negative, has not played for the club since then and went to a Swiss clinic for treatment shortly after the match.

"It's a load of nonsense. Because for years I have done my own anti-doping controls on my own, during the week before the match. And if I tested positive in my tests, I did not play,"

Maradona said. "And I played that time, didn't I?"

In 1994 he was banned from internationals for 15 months after failing a dope test at the World Cup finals.

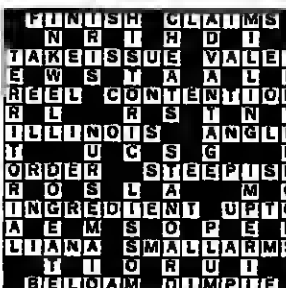
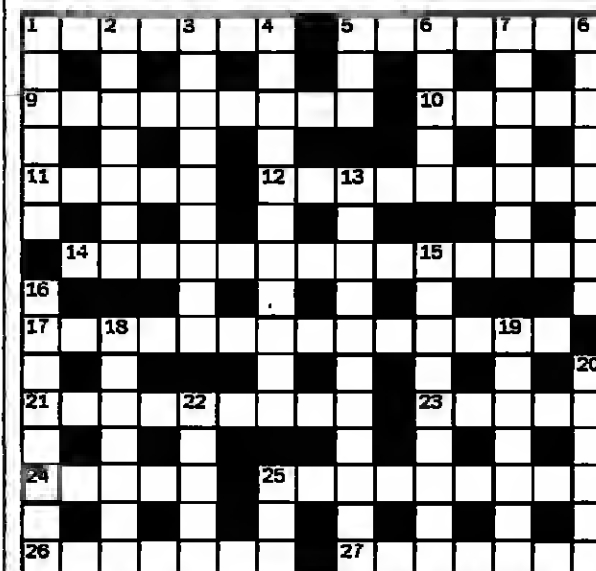
And in 1991 he was banned for 15 months for testing positive for cocaine while playing for Napoli. When asked whether he would play again, Maradona replied: "Yes, I think so. I will play at least one match with Boca before the end of the year."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3136, Tuesday 5 November

By Aired

Monday's Solution



- ACROSS**
- In which one's cruel as a rule (7)
 - About to crease and collapse (7)
 - Complaint I had after house became not quite solid (9)
 - Expenses of street in Greek island (5)
 - Terrorism's not altogether a mistake (5)
 - Cruel description of three-suited hand? (9)
 - This Leander was idolised (4-10)
 - Colleague's position when confronting anaesthetist? (8,6)
 - Shade of sad Prince? (5,4)
 - Stop beloved embracing bachelor (5)
 - Fear keeping right? Exactly (5)
 - Two crabs I found crawling in rubbish (4-1-4)

- DOWN**
- One trying the Northern English chemical (6)
 - Sorrow shown about code (7)
 - No fair use could be described as wicked (9)
 - One's accommodating to teenagers? (5,6)
 - King left Queen, say, being a rounder (3)
 - Crude diamonds are not reduced (5)
 - Decorate ceiling? It's to see what paper's like (5-2)
 - Part of New York with no story? (4,4)
 - A distinctly underwhelming presence? (11)

- 15** Urgency with which I'm going with TV etc. to Cyprus (9)
- 16** Unit of power? (8)
- 18** Confined to retreat, possible May disturbance (7)
- 19** Ban English doctor on Jason's ship
- 20** Place for mothers who don't care for babies? (6)
- 22** Heavy and in want of energy? Could be (5)
- 23** Insect showing strength shortly (3)

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